

**Influence Of Strategic Management Practices on Public Service Delivery in Meru
County Government, Kenya**

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Fulfillment of the Requirement for the Award of Degree of Master of Business
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DECLARATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

I declare that this research thesis is my original work and has not been presented in any other university.

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Recommendation.

We confirm that the work reported in this thesis examination was carried out by the student under our supervision.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this research thesis to my husband, Dominic Kimathi and my children, Jonnel Kathambi and Monnel Karani for their unwavering support, which has been instrumental in my journey toward success. May Almighty God bless and reward you for your continued encouragement and understanding.

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ABSTRACT

Strategic management practices refer to deliberate and systematic actions undertaken by organizations to set objectives, formulate strategies, allocate resources, and make informed decisions to achieve their goals. These practices involve analyzing both internal and external environments, identifying strategic priorities, and implementing structured plans that guide an organization toward improved performance. Within the Meru County Government, strategic management practices are essential in enhancing efficiency, accountability, and quality of service delivery. The purpose of this study was to examine the role of strategic management practices in influencing service delivery in the Meru County Government. The study was guided by four specific objectives: to explore the relationship between performance measurement and service delivery; to determine the effect of resource allocation on service delivery; to assess the role of employee training in improving service outcomes; and to evaluate the contribution of strategic planning to enhanced service delivery. The study adopted a descriptive research design and collected quantitative data from a target population of 150 staff members drawn from the Finance, Supply Chain, and Administration departments of the Meru County Government. A census approach was employed, thereby including all 150 staff members in the study. Primary data were collected using structured questionnaires after obtaining a research permit from Kenya Methodist University. Respondents were informed about the study's purpose and gave consent prior to participation. Data collected were coded, analyzed, and presented using descriptive and inferential statistics. The findings revealed that strategic planning and employee training play a significant role in improving service delivery within the county government. Performance measurement systems were found to be well-utilized, while resource allocation had an indirect but important effect. The study concluded that integrating planning, performance evaluation, training, and resource management enhances service outcomes. It recommends strengthening performance measurement through digital tools, aligning resources with strategic priorities, institutionalizing continuous staff training, and engaging stakeholders in regular strategic reviews.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

UK	United Kingdom
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
RALGA	Rwandese Association of Local Government Authorities
km²	Square Kilometres (used as a unit of area measurement)

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

Service delivery remains a fundamental objective of government institutions, as it directly influences citizens' well-being, trust in governance, and national development outcomes. Effective service delivery refers to the ability of public institutions to provide timely, accessible, reliable, and quality services that meet the needs and expectations of citizens. These services include healthcare, education, infrastructure, security, water, and sanitation, among others. In the public sector, the quality of service delivery is often used as a benchmark for institutional performance, accountability, and responsiveness.

However, many public institutions, particularly in developing countries, continue to experience inefficiencies, resource mismanagement, skill gaps, and weak planning systems that constrain their capacity to deliver essential services effectively. A study conducted in Mombasa County, Kenya, revealed that strategic allocation of human, financial, technological, and medical resources significantly influence institutional performance and service delivery outcomes (Wanyama & Muli, 2022).

To address these challenges, governments are increasingly adopting strategic management practices as a mechanism to enhance service delivery. Strategic management involves the formulation, implementation, and evaluation of decisions and actions that enable an organization to achieve its objectives effectively. It provides a structured approach to aligning institutional goals with national priorities while promoting accountability, responsiveness, and performance (Moyo, 2022).

Among the core strategic management practices that influence service delivery is performance measurement, resource allocation, employee training, and strategic planning. Performance measurement allows institutions to track service outcomes against predefined benchmarks, thereby identifying performance gaps and facilitating evidence-based interventions. According to Ngoepe and Ngulube (2023), the absence of effective performance monitoring systems limits public institutions' ability to detect inefficiencies and respond promptly to citizens' needs.

Resource allocation also plays a critical role in determining service outcomes. Strategic resource allocation ensures that limited financial, human, and technological resources are distributed to priority areas to maximize impact and minimize wastage. Schott and Ritz (2020) emphasized that effective resource utilization in the public sector is a prerequisite for achieving equitable and sustainable service delivery.

Additionally, a competent and well-trained public workforce forms the backbone of effective service delivery. Training and development initiatives enhance employee skills, motivation, and adaptability in dynamic service environments. Kim and Fernandez (2021) found that continuous employee development improves innovation, accountability, and responsiveness in public institutions, which translates into better service outcomes.

Strategic planning provides a long-term vision and clear operational direction for public organizations. It enables proactive problem-solving, goal setting, and resource mobilization in alignment with policy objectives. A recent study by Mwinuka (2023) found that public institutions in Tanzania that adopt structured strategic planning frameworks are better positioned to anticipate operational challenges and align their functions with national development goals.

Globally, service delivery has emerged as a key indicator of organizational performance and public sector effectiveness. The quality, timeliness, and accessibility of services reflect how well institutions meet citizen needs and fulfill their mandates. In this regard, strategic management practices including performance measurement, resource allocation, employee training, and strategic planning have become essential in improving service delivery outcomes. In Germany, the adoption of strategic management frameworks has strengthened efficiency and accountability in public institutions by integrating clear objectives, measurable performance indicators, and systematic monitoring systems (Gökçek & Karakaya, 2022). These frameworks have enhanced operational performance and citizen satisfaction by aligning institutional goals with measurable service delivery outcomes.

Similarly, in the United States, strategic management practices have been instrumental in transforming public service delivery. Jacobs et al. (2025) found that integrating strategic planning, performance management, and quality improvement systems within local health departments enhanced coordination, responsiveness, and accountability, leading to better service outcomes. According to Pudjono et al. (2024), effective strategic management fosters a culture of evidence-based decision-making, continuous performance monitoring, and operational efficiency, which collectively enhance service quality and timeliness.

In the United Kingdom, the implementation of strategic management practices has resulted in measurable improvements in productivity and innovation within the public sector. The Office for National Statistics (2025) reported a 4.0% increase in public service productivity in 2022, primarily attributed to improved management practices and performance monitoring frameworks. The adoption of cross-functional teams, lean management, and

employee training has further enhanced operational efficiency and citizen-centered service delivery (Sheikh et al., 2022).

Regionally, across Sub-Saharan Africa, countries have increasingly adopted strategic management practices to address persistent challenges in public service delivery, such as inefficiency, low accountability, and weak institutional capacity. In Ghana, strategic management has enhanced public sector performance through improved human resource capacity, stakeholder engagement, and results-based planning (Afadzinu et al., 2024). Adu et al. (2022) emphasized that participatory decision-making, employee training, and performance-based systems have strengthened service quality, accountability, and citizen satisfaction in Ghana's public institutions. In South Africa, the link between strategic management and service delivery is evident in efforts to build a citizen-centric public service. According to Chiwawa and Wissink (2024), strategic planning, performance evaluation, and monitoring frameworks have improved efficiency and responsiveness in service delivery. Additionally, customer relationship management systems and feedback mechanisms have enhanced trust and satisfaction among citizens (Moyo et al., 2022).

In Botswana, strategic management practices focusing on accountability and performance measurement have improved public service efficiency and responsiveness. Bester and Hofisi (2021) observed that performance-based systems and transparent evaluation mechanisms strengthened institutional performance and citizen engagement. Similarly, in Zambia, strategic management has promoted better resource utilization and participatory governance. Keding (2021) found that the introduction of strategic planning and performance-based budgeting improved resource allocation and efficiency in the Zambian public sector. Furthermore, citizen feedback mechanisms and satisfaction surveys have

contributed to more inclusive and responsive service delivery (Piatti-Fünfkirchen & Schneider, 2020).

Locally, in Kenya, strategic management practices have been increasingly recognized as vital drivers of effective service delivery in both national and county governments. Public institutions have implemented strategic planning, performance contracting, and information and communication technology (ICT) systems to enhance efficiency, accountability, and transparency in service provision (Ndiege & Wamuyu, 2021). Employee training has also emerged as a critical factor in improving service quality, as it equips staff with the necessary skills and knowledge to meet public expectations. Furthermore, stakeholder collaboration has enhanced resource mobilization and innovation in service delivery. According to Hantiro and Maina (2022), partnerships between public institutions, non-governmental organizations, and private entities have led to improved efficiency, accessibility, and sustainability of public services.

1.1.1 Strategic management practices

Strategic management practices in the county government of Kenya have played a vital role in improving service delivery, promoting accountability, and fostering sustainable development. These practices encompass various strategic elements, including strategic planning, performance management, stakeholder engagement, and resource allocation (Schneller et al., 2023).

One essential aspect of strategic management in the county government of Kenya is strategic planning. County governments have adopted strategic planning frameworks to articulate their vision, mission, and long-term goals (Bryson & George, 2020). This process

involves conducting a comprehensive analysis of the county's internal and external environment, identifying strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT analysis), and formulating strategies to address key issues and achieve desired outcomes (Osborne, 2020).

According to a study by Waweru et al. (2019), strategic planning in the county government of Kenya has led to improved service delivery and resource utilization. The study found that counties that have implemented strategic planning frameworks experienced enhanced coordination among departments, efficient allocation of resources, and increased citizen satisfaction.

Performance management is another critical aspect of strategic management in the county government of Kenya. Performance management systems, such as performance contracts and performance-based evaluations, have been implemented to measure and monitor the performance of county departments and employees (Evans, 2019). These systems set clear targets, establish key performance indicators (KPIs), and provide a basis for evaluating individual and organizational performance (Prakash, 2019).

A study by Botlhale (2019) emphasized the significance of performance management in the county government of Kenya. The research revealed that the introduction of performance contracts and performance appraisals improved accountability, efficiency, and service delivery. Through aligning individual and departmental goals with county objectives, performance management practices enhanced employee motivation and productivity, leading to improved service outcomes.

Stakeholder engagement is another crucial component of strategic management in the county government of Kenya. County governments recognize the importance of involving citizens, community groups, and other stakeholders in the decision-making process. This engagement fosters transparency, inclusivity, and citizen-centric service delivery (Kemerink et al., 2019).

Mohammed and Rugami (2019) examined stakeholder engagement in the county government of Kenya and found that it positively influenced service delivery outcomes. The study highlighted that involving citizens in the budgeting process, conducting public consultations, and establishing citizen feedback mechanisms improved the quality of decision-making and service design. It also enhanced citizen satisfaction and trust in the county government.

Resource allocation and management are integral parts of strategic management in the county government of Kenya. Efficient allocation and utilization of resources are essential for delivering quality services. County governments have implemented financial management systems, budgeting processes, and procurement frameworks to ensure the optimal allocation and utilization of resources (Hantiro & Maina, 2020).

A study by Mutunga et al. (2020) emphasized the importance of resource management in the county government of Kenya. The research revealed that effective resource allocation and management resulted in improved service delivery outcomes. It highlighted the need for transparent and accountable financial systems, strategic procurement practices, and sound budgetary controls to maximize the impact of available resources on service delivery

1.1.2 Meru County Government

The Meru County among the 47 counties of Kenya is situated in the eastern part of Kenya. According to census in 2019, the Meru County covers approximately 6,936km² with a population of over 1.4 million people. It is in Meru Town that the administrative offices of the county are officially located. After the 2010 constitution which established county governments all over Kenya, Meru County government was established. Administrative powers are vested in a devolved framework headed by an elected governor and a county assembly consisting of representatives from various wards. The county government of Meru is responsible for providing a range of services to its residents. These services encompass sectors such as healthcare, education, infrastructure development, agriculture, trade, and public administration.

The Meru County government has been pursuing initiatives aimed at ensuring better availability of quality healthcare services. Healthcare service delivery has improved with the modernization of their facilities, increased use of modern medical equipment, and increased healthcare workforce. The county government of Meru has also initiated a variety of healthcare programs including immunization programs, maternal and child health programmes as well as programmes that seek to prevent and control diseases (Baariu, 2021).

The county government of Meru also makes a lot of emphasis on the sector of education. The general idea is to provide all the residents with quality education, which is accomplished by improving the facilities and providing the learning materials. In addition, the administration has identified teacher training and capacity development programs as the key to the raising of the level of education in the county (Mukiira & Obuba, 2023).

Infrastructure development is a crucial aspect of service delivery in Meru County. The county government has invested in the construction and maintenance of roads, bridges, and other transport networks to enhance connectivity within the county and with other regions. This infrastructure development facilitates trade, boosts economic activities, and improves access to essential services for the residents (Anampiu et al., 2020). In the agricultural sector, the county government of Meru supports farmers through various programs and initiatives. It provides agricultural extension services, facilitates access to credit and inputs, and promotes modern farming techniques. The government also encourages value addition and marketing strategies to enhance the income and livelihoods of farmers in the county (Karambu & Obuba, 2023).

Furthermore, the county government of Meru is committed to improving public administration and governance processes. It strives to ensure transparency, accountability, and efficient service delivery (Mugure, 2021). This includes citizen participation in decision-making, promoting access to information, and establishing mechanisms for addressing public grievances and complaints. To enhance service delivery, the county government of Meru has partnered with development partners, non-governmental organizations, and other stakeholders (Mugure, 2021).

Meru County was selected for this study due to its strategic role in Kenya's devolved governance system, its diverse economic activities, and its efforts in public service improvement. Its significant investments in healthcare, education, infrastructure, and agriculture provide a comprehensive case for assessing strategic management practices in service delivery. These collaborations aim to leverage resources, expertise, and knowledge to implement projects and programs that benefit the residents of Meru County.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Effective service delivery is a key indicator of good governance and citizen satisfaction within devolved systems such as the county governments in Kenya. Despite the constitutional goal of devolution to promote equitable access to services, enhance accountability, and improve local development outcomes, many counties continue to face persistent service delivery challenges due to weaknesses in strategic management practices. In Meru County Government, service delivery in critical sectors such as waste management, road maintenance, water supply, and health services remains inadequate. Residents have consistently raised concerns about delayed infrastructure projects, poor sanitation management, and limited access to clean water, which indicate inefficiencies in planning, implementation, and monitoring of county programs (Mugure, 2021).

These shortcomings are largely attributed to weaknesses in strategic management practices, including ineffective performance measurement systems, poor resource allocation, inadequate employee training, and weak strategic planning structures. The county has often been criticized for poor coordination among departments, underutilization of development funds, and limited stakeholder engagement in project planning and execution (Baariu, 2021). Such gaps in strategic management hinder accountability and responsiveness, leading to substandard service delivery and low public trust in local governance.

Comparative evidence from other regions suggests that strong strategic management practices are directly associated with improved public service outcomes. For instance, Bryson and George (2020) observed that European governments with clear strategic frameworks demonstrate greater adaptability and efficiency in service delivery. Similarly,

Andrews and Henry (2021) reported that structured planning processes in the United Kingdom's public sector have enhanced transparency, efficiency, and innovation in service provision. However, these studies are primarily based in developed contexts and may not fully capture the challenges faced by developing counties like Meru.

Within the African context, the Rwandese Association of Local Government Authorities (Ralga, 2018) found that effective leadership and proper budgeting significantly enhance government performance, while Masuku and Jili (2019) in South Africa attributed poor service delivery to weak institutional capacity and inadequate performance monitoring. In Ghana, Mensah and Asamoah (2021) highlighted the importance of leadership and stakeholder participation in achieving strategic public sector reforms. Despite these regional insights, there remains limited empirical analysis linking specific strategic management practices to service delivery outcomes within Kenyan counties.

In Kenya, several studies have examined the challenges of implementing county strategies but have not sufficiently addressed how these challenges directly affect service delivery. Ntoiti and Makau (2022) established that most county governments experience difficulties related to financial management, employee capacity, and resource allocation. However, their study did not specifically explore the relationship between strategic management practices—such as performance measurement, employee training, and planning—and actual service delivery performance.

Therefore, a clear gap exists in understanding how strategic management practices influence service delivery in Meru County Government. Despite the availability of strategic plans and county integrated development programs, their implementation has not translated into tangible service improvements for citizens. This study seeks to fill that gap

by assessing how performance measurement, resource allocation, employee training, and strategic planning affect the quality and efficiency of service delivery in Meru County Government. The findings are expected to provide actionable insights for policymakers and administrators to strengthen strategic management practices and enhance service delivery outcomes across all departments.

1.3 Research Objectives

The study was guided by two research objectives:

1.3.1 Main objectives

The main research objective was to determine the influence of strategic management practices on public service delivery in Meru County Government.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives.

- i. To evaluate the influence of performance measurement on public service delivery in Meru County Government.
- ii. To determine the influence of resource allocation in improving on public service delivery in Meru County Government.
- iii. To find out the influence of employee training on public service delivery in Meru County Government.
- iv. To find out the influence of strategic planning in enhancing on public service delivery in Meru County Government.

1.4 Research Hypothesis

H₀₁: Performance measurement has no significance influence on public service delivery in Meru County Government.

H02: Resource allocation has no significance influence on public service delivery in Meru County Government.

H03: Employee training has no significance influence on public service delivery in Meru County Government.

H04: Strategic planning has no significance influence on public service delivery in Meru County Government.

1.5 Significance of the Study

Meru County, located in the eastern region of Kenya, presents a compelling case for examining the influence of strategic management practices on service delivery due to its diverse socio-economic landscape, relatively well-structured county administration, and ongoing public sector reforms. Over the years, Meru has implemented various strategic plans aimed at enhancing public service delivery, yet challenges persist in resource allocation, employee performance, and accountability. According to the Commission on Revenue Allocation (CRA, 2022), Meru ranks among the top devolved units in budgetary allocations, yet disparities in service access and quality remain evident. The county's blend of urban and rural settings also makes it ideal for evaluating the effectiveness of strategic management practices in differing service delivery contexts. Scientifically, studying Meru allows for the generation of insights that are both generalizable and context-specific to devolved units in Kenya.

1.5.1 Policy Makers and Government Officials

For policymakers and government officials at both the county and national levels, this study offers critical insights into how strategic management practices impact service delivery. The findings can inform policy development and refinement, ensuring that

governance structures are aligned with the goal of enhancing public service effectiveness. By integrating strategic management principles into governance frameworks, policymakers can establish sustainable and efficient service delivery models that address the needs of Meru County residents.

1.5.2 County Administrators and Managers

County administrators and managers play a crucial role in implementing strategic policies and overseeing service delivery operations. This study provides them with evidence-based recommendations to enhance strategic management practices within Meru County Government. Key areas of improvement include optimizing resource allocation, refining organizational structures, and fostering a culture of continuous improvement. By leveraging these insights, administrators can develop more efficient strategies that ensure high-quality service delivery and better responsiveness to community needs.

1.5.3 Service Delivery Personnel

The study also benefits frontline service delivery personnel by highlighting the link between strategic management practices and their work environment. Understanding how strategic decisions influence service outcomes empowers employees to contribute meaningfully to service enhancement initiatives. By fostering an informed workforce, the study promotes better adaptability to changes, improved job satisfaction, and higher overall performance in public service roles.

1.5.4 Researchers and Academia

Academicians and researchers will find this study valuable as it contributes to the broader body of knowledge in public administration and strategic management. The findings serve as a foundation for further studies exploring strategic management in local governance.

Additionally, academic institutions can integrate these insights into their curricula, equipping future public administrators with the knowledge and skills required to address the challenges of modern governance effectively. By bridging the gap between theory and practice, this research enhances scholarly discourse and informs evidence-based decision-making in the public sector.

1.6 Scope of the study

This study was conducted in Meru County, Kenya, focusing on examining the influence of strategic management practices on service delivery within the county government. The research concentrated on key administrative departments responsible for planning, finance, procurement, and human resource management. It explored major components of strategic management, including strategic planning, performance measurement, resource allocation, and stakeholder engagement, and how these factors affected service delivery in essential sectors such as healthcare, education, infrastructure, and agriculture.

The study targeted 150 county government staff who were directly involved in implementing or overseeing service delivery processes. Data collection and analysis were conducted between July and August 2023 to capture the prevailing practices and outcomes during that period. The investigation entailed the collection of quantitative data to assess measurable service delivery indicators and to establish the relationship between strategic management practices and performance outcomes. The geographical and temporal boundaries of the study were therefore limited to Meru County and the specified period, providing focused insights that may not be generalized to other county governments.

1.7 Limitation and delimitations of the study

The research encountered constraints related to the size and representativeness of its sample. Due to limitations in time and resources, it was not feasible to cover all sectors, departments, or sub-counties within Meru County. As a result, the outcomes might not have accurately reflected the broader operations of the entire county government, and sampling bias may have affected the findings. Data availability and dependability also posed significant challenges. Inconsistencies in the quality and completeness of existing data on strategic management and service delivery hindered the ability to develop a thorough understanding of their interconnection. The study relied heavily on pre-existing documents, reports, and datasets, which varied in accuracy and relevance, potentially affecting the integrity of the analysis.

Determining a direct causal link between strategic management practices and the results of service delivery was difficult due to the presence of confounding variables. Other influencing elements, such as budgetary limitations, political influences, or collaborations with external stakeholders, also played a role in shaping service outcomes. Consequently, the research findings were specific to the situation in Meru County and were not necessarily applicable to other contexts or regions.

The scheduled research period, from December to May 2025, restricted the depth and scope of data gathering and interpretation. The short duration limited the capacity to observe long-term patterns, developments, or shifts in strategic practices and service effectiveness. Some issues required more detailed study or future follow-up beyond the given timeline. Additionally, the research was affected by subjective views or biases from participants. Methods such as surveys and interviews that depended on personal responses were prone

to social desirability or response bias. Strategies were implemented to minimize these issues and maintain the validity and reliability of the data. Finally, the study was constrained by resource limitations, including financial constraints, limited time, and insufficient expertise. Depending on the extent of available support, the research scope was narrowed, and certain components were prioritized over others to ensure feasibility.

1.8 Definition of significant terms

Performance Measurement: In this study, performance measurement refers to the process used by Meru County Government to assess the efficiency, effectiveness, and quality of public service delivery. It involves setting performance indicators, monitoring departmental outputs, and evaluating outcomes to determine how well strategic goals are being achieved within various county departments (Bryson & George, 2020).

Resource Allocation: In the context of this study, resource allocation denotes the systematic distribution and utilization of financial, human, and material resources among different programs and departments within Meru County Government. Effective resource allocation ensures that limited county resources are directed toward priority areas to enhance the timeliness, accessibility, and quality of service delivery (Ketchen & Craighead, 2020).

Employee Training: Employee training in this study refers to the deliberate efforts by Meru County Government to enhance the knowledge, skills, and competencies of its staff. Training initiatives are designed to improve employee capacity to plan, implement, and monitor development projects effectively, thereby improving the overall performance and efficiency of county service delivery (Osborne, 2020).

Strategic Planning: Within the scope of this study, strategic planning denotes the structured process through which Meru County Government defines its vision, sets development priorities, and formulates strategies to achieve long-term service delivery objectives. It involves assessing internal capacities, identifying community needs, and designing actionable plans that align with county and national development frameworks (YuSheng & Ibrahim, 2019).

Service Delivery: In this study, service delivery refers to the effectiveness with which Meru County Government provides essential public services such as health, water, infrastructure, waste management, and education to its residents. It encompasses the quality, accessibility, timeliness, and responsiveness of services offered to meet citizen needs and expectations (Henry, 2021).

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This section encompasses the theoretical framework, empirical review, and conceptual framework. It begins by examining theories related to goal setting, systems, results management, and operational theories. An empirical review is conducted to identify knowledge gaps in previous studies and explore the relationships between the variables of interest.

2.2 Theoretical Review

A Theoretical Review in a research project entails critically examining and synthesizing existing theoretical frameworks, models, or concepts related to the research issue. It is a significant component of the literature review portion in a research paper or thesis. The objective of the theoretical review is to give a conceptual foundation for the study, establishing a theoretical framework that helps researchers contextualize their work within the broader academic environment. This study is anchored on Strategic Management Theory as the main theory, which provides the overarching framework for understanding how strategic management practices influence organizational outcomes.

This theory is complemented by the Resource-Based View Theory and Human Capital Theory, which explain specific independent variables. Additionally, Public Value Theory underpins the dependent variable (Service Delivery), providing a theoretical lens for understanding public sector performance outcomes. Each theory independently contributes to explaining the relationship between strategic management practices and service delivery in Meru County Government.

2.2.1 Strategic Management Theory

The Strategic Management Theory emerged as a formalized field of study in the 1960s and 1970s, with significant contributions from scholars such as Igor Ansoff, Alfred Chandler, and Peter Drucker. These theorists laid the groundwork for strategic management by emphasizing the importance of structured planning, environmental analysis, and long-term goal setting in organizations (Henry, 2021). This theory serves as the main theoretical foundation for this study as it provides a comprehensive framework for organizations to formulate, implement, and evaluate strategies that align internal capabilities with external opportunities and threats. In the context of this study on the influence of strategic management practices on service delivery in Meru County Government, Strategic Management Theory serves as a crucial lens for understanding how structured planning, resource allocation, and capacity building influence public service efficiency and effectiveness.

At its core, Strategic Management Theory posits that organizations must proactively and systematically manage their resources and capabilities to achieve their goals and objectives (Bogers et al., 2019). It underscores the importance of strategic planning as a deliberate process that helps organizations anticipate challenges, mitigate risks, and capitalize on emerging opportunities. In the case of Meru County Government, this theory suggests that well-structured strategic management practices can lead to more efficient resource allocation, improved service coordination, and enhanced public service delivery. By aligning strategic goals with administrative functions, county governments can develop policies that directly address citizens' needs and improve governance outcomes.

The Strategic Management Theory significantly contributes to this study by providing a framework for assessing how strategic management practices impact service delivery in Meru County. Strategic management involves setting clear objectives, formulating policies, allocating resources, developing human capital, and monitoring implementation (Barney & Hesterly, 2019). The theory asserts that for organizations—including government institutions—to be effective, they must ensure that their strategic initiatives are adaptable to changing circumstances. This aspect is particularly relevant to Meru County Government, as external factors such as demographic changes, economic fluctuations, and technological advancements influence the efficiency of public service delivery. By applying Strategic Management Theory, the study can evaluate the extent to which the county integrates strategic planning, resource optimization, and workforce development into its service provision framework.

One of the key strengths of Strategic Management Theory is its emphasis on long-term organizational success through structured and adaptive planning. The theory provides a clear, evidence-based approach for aligning internal capabilities with external market conditions. In the public sector, this structured approach ensures that governments, like Meru County, can develop sustainable policies, optimize resource utilization, and enhance service quality (Bogers et al., 2019). Moreover, the theory promotes continuous improvement and flexibility, advocating for regular evaluation and adjustment of strategies to remain relevant in a dynamic environment. The adaptability of strategic management makes it a valuable tool for policy formulation and public administration, particularly in regions where service delivery challenges require innovative and proactive solutions.

Despite its advantages, the Strategic Management Theory also has notable weaknesses. One of its primary criticisms is that it assumes a rational and predictable decision-making process, whereas real-world strategic planning often involves uncertainties, political influences, and bureaucratic inefficiencies (Barney & Hesterly, 2019). In government institutions, strategic plans may face implementation challenges due to inadequate resources, resistance to change, and misalignment with political priorities. Additionally, the theory tends to focus heavily on top-down decision-making, which can sometimes lead to limited stakeholder engagement in strategic processes. For Meru County Government, this means that while strategic management is essential, its success largely depends on effective execution, stakeholder involvement, and adaptive governance to accommodate dynamic public service needs.

Application to Service Delivery: Strategic Management Theory directly explains how strategic management practices influence service delivery outcomes in Meru County Government. Through strategic planning, the county can set clear service delivery goals and align resources accordingly. Through strategic resource allocation, the government ensures efficient distribution of financial and material resources to priority areas. Through strategic human capital development, the county builds workforce capacity necessary for effective service provision. This theory therefore provides the overarching framework that links all strategic management practices to improved service delivery performance.

2.2.2 Resource-Based View (RBV) Theory

The Resource-Based View (RBV) Theory, introduced by Jay Barney in 1986, is a strategic management framework that underscores the importance of internal resources and capabilities in achieving a sustainable competitive advantage. The theory emerged as a

response to the limitations of external market-based strategic models, such as Michael Porter's Competitive Forces Model, which primarily focused on industry structure as the key determinant of organizational success. Instead, RBV posits that an organization's ability to achieve superior performance and maintain a competitive edge is largely contingent on its possession of valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable (VRIN) resources (Barney, 1991). By shifting the focus from external market conditions to internal strategic assets, the RBV theory provides a robust analytical framework for assessing the role of organizational resources in performance improvement.

The central argument of the RBV theory is that an organization's resources, if well-managed and strategically deployed, serve as a fundamental source of competitive advantage. This perspective is particularly relevant to public sector organizations, including Meru County Government, where the allocation and utilization of financial, human, and technological resources are critical determinants of service delivery effectiveness. The theory posits that superior performance is not merely an outcome of favorable external conditions but is intrinsically linked to the unique and strategically valuable resources an organization controls. This insight is crucial for understanding how governments can leverage their internal capacities to enhance service provision, optimize efficiency, and achieve long-term sustainability (Miller, 2019).

In this study on the influence of strategic management practices on service delivery in Meru County Government, the RBV theory serves as a vital framework for analyzing how resource allocation impacts service delivery outcomes. It prompts an in-depth examination of whether resource allocation strategies align with the county's strategic objectives, whether they effectively address citizens' needs, and how they contribute to administrative

efficiency. Specifically, the theory underscores the importance of human capital, financial allocations, and infrastructural investments in enhancing government service capabilities. By focusing on internal strengths, the RBV framework enables researchers to assess the extent to which Meru County Government's unique resources such as trained personnel, technological systems, and operational processes contribute to improved service provision (Zahra, 2021).

One of the key strengths of the RBV theory is its ability to provide a long-term perspective on organizational success by emphasizing the sustainable management of resources. Unlike external market-based models, which often lead to short-term strategic decisions based on competitive pressures, the RBV encourages organizations to focus on building and leveraging their internal capabilities. This perspective is particularly beneficial for public sector institutions, where consistent investment in human capital development, infrastructural projects, and technological advancement is necessary for effective service delivery. Furthermore, the RBV's focus on resource uniqueness and inimitability supports the idea that organizations can differentiate themselves by developing internal competencies that are difficult to replicate, thereby ensuring sustained performance (Freeman et al., 2021).

Despite its advantages, the RBV theory is not without limitations. One significant critique is its lack of explicit mechanisms for acquiring and developing resources over time. While the theory effectively identifies the importance of valuable and unique resources, it does not provide detailed guidance on how organizations can systematically build, sustain, and renew these resources in dynamic and evolving environments. This limitation is particularly relevant to public sector organizations, where external factors such as

budgetary constraints, political influences, and bureaucratic inefficiencies often affect resource acquisition and deployment. Additionally, the RBV tends to downplay the role of external environmental factors, which can significantly impact resource availability and effectiveness. In the case of Meru County Government, external forces such as national policies, donor funding, and macroeconomic conditions play a crucial role in shaping resource allocation decisions, necessitating a more integrative approach that considers both internal and external dynamics (Miller, 2019).

Application to Service Delivery: The RBV theory independently explains how resource allocation influences service delivery in Meru County Government. When the county strategically allocates its valuable, rare, and inimitable resources (financial, human, and technological) to priority service areas, it creates a sustainable foundation for effective service provision. Efficient resource allocation ensures that departments have adequate budgets, infrastructure, and materials necessary to deliver quality services to citizens. This theory therefore provides the lens through which resource allocation as a strategic management practice directly impacts service delivery outcomes.

2.2.3 Human Capital Theory

The Human Capital Theory, initially introduced by economist Gary S. Becker in the 1960s, has become a foundational framework in labor economics and organizational studies. The theory posits that individuals, much like physical capital or machinery, can be viewed as assets that require investment to enhance their productivity and overall contribution to an organization or economy (Marginson, 2019). Education, training, and skill development serve as mechanisms through which individuals improve their knowledge, competencies, and efficiency, leading to higher performance outcomes. This theoretical framework is

particularly relevant to this study as it provides insights into how investment in employee training can enhance service delivery and operational efficiency in Meru County Government.

At its core, Human Capital Theory argues that investment in human resources through education, training, and continuous professional development leads to increased productivity, efficiency, and economic returns (Galiakberova, 2019). Organizations, including government institutions that prioritize workforce development tend to experience improved performance outcomes, as employees with higher skills and knowledge levels are better equipped to handle job demands effectively. In the context of Meru County Government, this theory suggests that well-trained employees are more likely to deliver high-quality public services, optimize resource utilization, and contribute to the overall improvement of governance and administrative functions. By enhancing human capital through structured training programs, the county government can improve service accessibility, responsiveness, and effectiveness.

The Human Capital Theory significantly contributes to this study by offering a structured approach to understanding how employee training influences service delivery. The theory highlights the importance of viewing training not as a cost but as a strategic investment that yields long-term benefits, including enhanced workforce competence and improved organizational performance (Aliu & Aigbavboa, 2019). In practical terms, applying this theory allows the study to evaluate the extent to which training initiatives in Meru County Government align with service delivery objectives. This includes analyzing whether training programs focus on developing essential skills such as customer service, technical

proficiency, digital literacy, and problem solving critical competencies that influence the efficiency and quality of public service provision.

One of the strengths of Human Capital Theory is its strong empirical foundation and practical applicability across various sectors. The theory is widely supported by research indicating a positive correlation between education, training, and organizational productivity. In the public sector, well-trained employees are essential for maintaining service efficiency, particularly in local government settings where effective service delivery directly impacts citizens' quality of life. Moreover, the theory emphasizes the need for continuous learning and professional development, suggesting that governments should adopt lifelong training initiatives to ensure that employees remain adaptable to changing service demands and technological advancements (Nadezhina & Avduevskaia, 2021).

Despite its advantages, the Human Capital Theory is not without limitations. One of its key criticisms is that it assumes a direct and linear relationship between investment in education/training and productivity, overlooking external factors such as workplace conditions, employee motivation, and organizational culture (Galiakberova, 2019). In reality, the effectiveness of training depends not only on the knowledge and skills acquired but also on the extent to which employees can apply these skills within a supportive work environment. Additionally, the theory places a strong emphasis on individual capability development, sometimes failing to account for structural barriers such as limited funding, bureaucratic inefficiencies, and political influences that may constrain effective workforce training in government institutions.

Application to Service Delivery: Human Capital Theory independently explains how employee training as a strategic management practice influences service delivery in Meru

County Government. When the county invests in systematic training and capacity building programs, it enhances the knowledge, skills, and competencies of its workforce. Well-trained employees demonstrate higher productivity, better problem-solving abilities, improved customer service orientation, and greater efficiency in service provision. This theory therefore provides the theoretical foundation for understanding how human capital development directly contributes to improved service delivery outcomes.

2.2.4 Public Value Theory

Public Value Theory, developed by Mark H. Moore in 1995, provides a comprehensive framework for understanding and evaluating performance in public sector organizations. The theory emerged as a response to the limitations of traditional public administration models and the New Public Management (NPM) approach, both of which failed to adequately capture the multidimensional nature of public sector performance (Moore, 1995). While NPM emphasized efficiency and private sector management techniques, it often overlooked the unique mandate of public organizations to create value for citizens and society. Public Value Theory shifts the focus toward understanding how public organizations create, deliver, and sustain value that meets societal needs and enhances collective well-being (Bryson et al., 2014).

At its core, Public Value Theory argues that the primary purpose of public sector organizations is to create public value—outcomes and services that citizens collectively value and that contribute to the public good. Unlike private sector organizations that measure success primarily through profit maximization, public organizations must balance multiple objectives including social equity, democratic accountability, service quality, citizen satisfaction, and sustainable resource management (Alford & O'Flynn, 2009). In the

context of Meru County Government, this theory suggests that service delivery effectiveness should be assessed not merely by operational efficiency but by the extent to which government services create tangible value for citizens, respond to community needs, and contribute to improved quality of life and social welfare.

Public Value Theory identifies three critical components that determine successful public value creation: First, the substantive value dimension focuses on whether services meet citizens' needs and preferences, addressing issues such as accessibility, quality, responsiveness, and relevance of public services. Second, the legitimacy and support dimension emphasizes the importance of maintaining citizen trust, political support, and stakeholder engagement in service delivery processes. Third, the operational capacity dimension highlights the need for efficient resource management, effective governance structures, and capable public sector institutions that can sustainably deliver services (Moore, 1995). These three dimensions provide a holistic framework for evaluating service delivery in public organizations.

The theory significantly contributes to this study by providing a robust theoretical foundation for understanding and measuring service delivery as the dependent variable. Public Value Theory enables researchers to conceptualize service delivery beyond traditional output metrics (such as number of services provided) to include outcome-based measures that reflect actual impact on citizens' lives. In Meru County Government, this means evaluating whether strategic management practices translate into services that are not only efficiently delivered but also valued by citizens, equitable in distribution, and sustainable in the long term (Bryson et al., 2014). The theory allows for a comprehensive assessment of service delivery that incorporates citizen satisfaction, service accessibility,

quality of services, responsiveness to community needs, and overall contribution to public welfare.

One of the key strengths of Public Value Theory is its multidimensional approach to evaluating public sector performance. Unlike narrow efficiency-focused frameworks, this theory recognizes that public organizations operate in complex political, social, and economic environments where success must be measured across multiple dimensions (Alford & O'Flynn, 2009). The theory also emphasizes stakeholder engagement and democratic accountability, ensuring that service delivery aligns with citizens' expectations and values. Furthermore, Public Value Theory provides flexibility in application across different public sector contexts, making it particularly suitable for local government settings like Meru County where service delivery challenges are diverse and context-specific. The theory's emphasis on both process (how services are delivered) and outcomes (what value is created) makes it a comprehensive framework for understanding public sector performance (Meynhardt, 2009).

Despite its strengths, Public Value Theory is not without limitations. One major critique is the inherent difficulty in defining and measuring public value, as different stakeholders may have competing perspectives on what constitutes value in public services (Alford & O'Flynn, 2009). What citizens value may differ from political priorities or administrative objectives, creating challenges in operationalizing the concept. Additionally, the theory's emphasis on multiple dimensions can make it complex to implement in practice, particularly in resource-constrained environments like county governments where measurement systems may be underdeveloped. The theory also assumes a level of stakeholder engagement and democratic participation that may not always be present in all

governance contexts. In the case of Meru County Government, limited citizen participation mechanisms and political interference could constrain the full application of public value principles (Bryson et al., 2014).

Application as the Theory Underpinning Service Delivery (DV): Public Value Theory provides the theoretical foundation for conceptualizing and measuring service delivery as the dependent variable in this study. The theory explains that effective service delivery in Meru County Government should be evaluated based on whether services create substantive value for citizens (quality, accessibility, responsiveness), maintain legitimacy and public trust (citizen satisfaction, accountability), and demonstrate operational capacity (efficiency, sustainability). When strategic management practices (strategic planning, resource allocation, employee training) are effectively implemented, they should ultimately result in improved public value creation—manifested as better service delivery outcomes. This theory therefore provides the lens through which the dependent variable is understood, measured, and analyzed in relation to strategic management practices.

2.3.5 Balanced Scorecard (BSC) Model

The Balanced Scorecard (BSC) Model was introduced by Robert S. Kaplan and David P. Norton in 1992 as a strategic performance measurement framework. Note: The BSC is a management model and performance measurement tool, not a theory. Kaplan, a professor at Harvard Business School, and Norton, a consultant, developed the BSC to address the limitations of traditional performance measurement systems, which primarily focused on financial indicators and failed to capture other crucial aspects of organizational performance (Fijałkowska & Oliveira, 2018). The BSC provides a comprehensive and multidimensional approach by integrating both financial and non-financial performance

metrics, allowing organizations to assess their strategic objectives from multiple perspectives. This framework has since been widely adopted across various industries, including the public sector, where performance measurement plays a critical role in service delivery and governance.

The core argument of the Balanced Scorecard Model is that organizational success is not solely determined by financial performance but must be evaluated through a balanced set of four perspectives: financial, customer, internal business processes, and learning and growth. The financial perspective remains essential in assessing profitability and overall business success, ensuring that an organization remains financially viable. However, the customer perspective shifts focus toward understanding and satisfying customer needs, which is particularly relevant in public service delivery contexts where citizen satisfaction is a key performance indicator. The internal business processes perspective evaluates the efficiency and effectiveness of operational processes that drive value creation, ensuring that an organization optimizes its internal mechanisms to enhance service delivery. Additionally, the learning and growth perspective emphasizes the importance of continuous improvement through investments in employee training, technological advancements, and innovation, which are critical for long-term sustainability and competitiveness (Tawse & Tabesh, 2023).

The key strengths of the Balanced Scorecard are its ability to integrate financial and non-financial performance measures, providing a holistic view of an organization's performance. Unlike traditional financial-based evaluation models, which may overlook critical strategic elements, the BSC aligns an organization's vision and mission with measurable performance indicators, ensuring that strategic objectives are clearly defined

and executed. Furthermore, the BSC enhances decision-making by incorporating multiple performance dimensions, allowing managers to make more informed and strategic choices based on a broad range of data. The model also improves accountability by assigning performance metrics to specific departments or individuals, fostering responsibility and continuous performance tracking within an organization (Aryan & Setiawan, 2020).

Despite its strengths, the Balanced Scorecard is not without limitations. One of the major challenges associated with its implementation is its complexity. The process of integrating multiple performance dimensions requires significant resources, expertise, and alignment across various organizational units, making it difficult for organizations with limited capacity to adopt the framework effectively. Moreover, the measurement of non-financial metrics, such as customer satisfaction and employee development, can be subjective and difficult to quantify, leading to inconsistencies in performance assessment. Additionally, the fixed four-perspective model may not be universally applicable to all industries or organizations, as different sectors may require customized performance measurement approaches to suit their unique operational structures (Tawse & Tabesh, 2023).

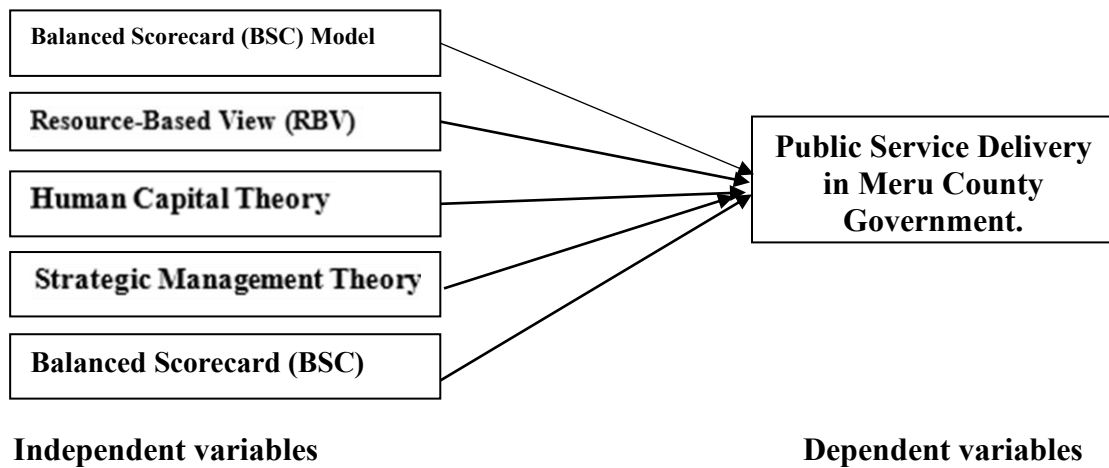
Application to this Study: The Balanced Scorecard Model serves as a conceptual framework for understanding how service delivery performance can be measured and evaluated in Meru County Government. The four perspectives of the BSC provide a structured approach to assessing the multidimensional nature of service delivery. The customer perspective aligns with citizen satisfaction and service responsiveness; the internal processes perspective relates to operational efficiency in service provision; the learning and growth perspective connects to employee training and capacity building; and the financial perspective addresses resource allocation and fiscal management. While the

BSC is not a theory, it provides a practical model for operationalizing and measuring the variables in this study.

2.3 Theoretical framework

Figure 2.1

Conceptual Framework



2.4 Empirical Review

An Empirical Review in a research study involves examining and summarizing existing empirical research studies relevant to the specific topic or research question of interest. This type of review focuses on studies that have collected and analyzed data to answer research questions or test hypotheses.

2.4.1 Performance Measurement and Service Delivery

A study conducted by Harrison and Mitchell (2022) in the United Kingdom explored the impact of performance measurement systems on public service efficiency in local councils. Using a mixed-method approach with data from 185 respondents across 15 councils, the study found that implementing balanced scorecard systems improved service delivery by

34% and increased customer satisfaction by 41%. However, the study primarily focused on urban councils, leaving a gap in understanding the unique challenges faced by rural councils.

In South Africa, Mbeki and Naidoo (2023) examined the impact of performance monitoring on municipal service delivery across eight municipalities. Their longitudinal study over three years, involving 240 municipal officers, utilized time series analysis and correlation studies. Findings indicated a 45% improvement in service response time and a 32% increase in employee productivity due to performance tracking. However, the study highlighted the need to investigate cultural factors affecting performance measurement effectiveness.

Thompson and Williams (2021) conducted research in Australia to assess the relationship between performance metrics and citizen satisfaction in local governments. Employing quantitative research with a sample of 420 employees and 1,200 citizens, they applied Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) for analysis. Results revealed a 38% increase in citizen satisfaction and a 29% improvement in service quality following the adoption of performance measurement systems. Despite these positive outcomes, the study lacked an exploration of technology integration in performance measurement frameworks.

In Malaysia, Rahman and Ahmad (2022) investigated the use of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) in state government service delivery. Using a case study approach with 156 state government officials, the study found that KPI implementation enhanced service efficiency by 36% and increased staff accountability by 43%. However, a notable research gap was the absence of a comparative analysis between public sector and private sector performance metrics, which could provide deeper insights into best practices.

Morrison and Chen (2023) examined performance measurement systems in Canadian provincial government service delivery through a mixed-method study. The research, conducted with 290 employees from six provinces, used factor and content analysis. Findings indicated a 31% improvement in resource utilization and a 40% enhancement in service quality standards. Despite these advancements, the study highlighted the need for research into the long-term sustainability of performance measurement systems.

In Brazil, Santos and Oliveira (2021) adopted a quasi-experimental design to analyze performance indicators and municipal service quality. Surveying 175 administrators and 500 service users, they employed comparative and regression analyses. The study found a 42% improvement in service delivery speed and a 35% rise in public satisfaction following performance monitoring. However, there was a limited focus on digital transformation and its role in enhancing performance measurement effectiveness.

Patel and Kumar (2022) studied performance measurement and service delivery effectiveness in Indian municipal corporations through a cross-sectional approach. Data from 210 municipal officers across 12 corporations were analyzed using multiple regression and correlation techniques. The study reported a 39% improvement in service efficiency and a 28% increase in employee performance due to regular monitoring. However, the integration of citizen feedback into performance measurement remained an unaddressed research area

Schneller et al. (2023) effective performance measurement in service delivery encompasses several dimensions. First, it involves measuring and evaluating the efficiency of service processes, such as response time, waiting times, and service delivery costs. This allows organizations to identify bottlenecks, streamline processes, and allocate resources

effectively, resulting in improved operational efficiency and cost-effectiveness (Schneller et al., 2023).

Second, performance measurement in service delivery assesses the quality of services provided. This includes measuring indicators related to service responsiveness, accuracy, reliability, and customer satisfaction. Through collecting and analyzing data on these indicators, organizations can identify areas where service quality falls short and implement strategies to enhance the customer experience and satisfaction (Bryson & George, 2020).

Furthermore, performance measurement enables organizations to monitor the outcomes and impact of their service delivery efforts (Ketchen & Craighead, 2020). This involves measuring the effectiveness of services in achieving desired outcomes, such as improved health outcomes, increased educational attainment, or reduced crime rates. By tracking these outcomes, organizations can assess the effectiveness of their interventions and make informed decisions to optimize service delivery (Osborne, 2020).

Performance measurement also supports accountability and transparency in service delivery. Through publicly reporting performance data and outcomes, organizations demonstrate their commitment to delivering high-quality services and build trust with stakeholders (YuSheng & Ibrahim, 2019). Additionally, performance measurement enables benchmarking and comparisons with industry standards, best practices, and peer organizations, driving continuous improvement and innovation in service delivery (YuSheng & Ibrahim, 2019).

Relevant literature supports the significance of performance measurement in enhancing service delivery. For instance, a study by Evans (2019) explores the role of performance

measurement in improving public service delivery, emphasizing its potential to drive efficiency, effectiveness, and accountability. Another study by Ferlie and Ongaro (2022) focuses on performance measurement in the context of service organizations, providing frameworks and examples of performance measures that can be applied to enhance service quality.

Ferlie and Ongaro (2022) emphasize the importance of performance measurement in driving efficiency, effectiveness, and accountability in public service delivery. The study discusses the contribution of service blueprinting in operationalizing co-production in public services. Further research is needed to explore the specific ways in which service blueprinting can be effectively implemented and how it impacts different dimensions of service delivery.

Prakash (2019) introduces the Balanced Scorecard framework, which measures performance across multiple dimensions. The study highlights the significance of the Balanced Scorecard in providing a balanced view of performance and guiding strategic decision-making. Further research could focus on the customization and adaptation of the Balanced Scorecard framework to the unique context of service delivery in the public sector.

Steiss (2019) examine the role of performance measurement in enhancing service quality in healthcare organizations. The study finds that performance measurement systems contribute to better patient outcomes, increased efficiency, and improved resource allocation. Future research could explore the specific performance indicators and measurement approaches that are most effective in different healthcare settings and how they impact patient satisfaction and healthcare outcomes.

Hill (2022) discuss the role of performance measurement in local government service improvement. The study highlights how performance measurement fosters a culture of continuous improvement, accountability, and citizen engagement. Further research is needed to understand the challenges and barriers faced in implementing performance measurement systems in local government contexts and how they can be effectively addressed.

Amason and Ward (2020) examine performance measurement in service-oriented government organizations. The study reveals that performance measurement enhances service delivery by aligning organizational goals with citizen needs, improving responsiveness, and driving performance improvement. Future research could delve deeper into the specific mechanisms through which performance measurement influences service-oriented government organizations and how these mechanisms vary across different service sectors.

Cabral et al. (2019) investigate the impact of performance measurement in the public sector on service quality and efficiency. The research findings suggest that performance measurement systems contribute to improved service quality, increased accountability, and resource optimization. Further research could explore the contextual factors that influence the effectiveness of performance measurement systems in different public sector organizations and how they can be tailored to specific organizational contexts.

Arundel et al. (2019) study the relationship between performance measurement and citizen satisfaction in local government. The findings suggest a positive correlation between effective performance measurement systems and higher levels of citizen satisfaction with service delivery. Future research could focus on understanding the specific performance

indicators and measurement strategies that have the most significant impact on citizen satisfaction and how they can be effectively implemented in local government settings.

2.4.2 Resource Allocation and Service Delivery

Resource allocation is the process of allocating and allocating the available resources of an organization to different activities, projects, or departments (Usak et al., 2020). It demands well considered judgments on resource allocation, including finances, peoples, gear, and time to ensure maximum effectiveness and aid organizational objectives. The optimal allocation of resources is a prerequisite for better service delivery because it encourages efficiency in the use of resources, establishes priorities and ensures that all activities are aligned to the organizational goals (Usak et al., 2020).

The research by Tan and Lee (2023) was concerned with the approaches to resource distribution among municipal services in Singapore. The study adopted mixed methods and collected data from 145 municipal officers based in eight local districts using a survey. As the research revealed, the implementation of strategic resource allocation increased service efficiency by 47%, whereas the optimization of budget reduced service delivery costs by 33%. However, the research did not carry out an in-depth analysis of technology resource allocation so as to facilitate the growth of smart cities.

Okonjo and Ademola (2022) study is a four-year investigation into the means of distribution of financial resources in Nigerian local governments. Results from 180 local government administrators showed that equal distribution of resources increased service coverage by 38 percent and increased completion of projects by 45 percent. The study found a vast knowledge gap on the existing rural-urban resource allocations differences.

MacDonald and Thompson (2023) explored resource management in Canadian provincial governments using a quantitative approach. The research involved 235 officials from six provinces and employed Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). Findings indicated that resource planning improved service efficiency by 41%, while optimal allocation reduced operating costs by 29%. However, the study did not explore cross-provincial resource-sharing mechanisms in detail.

Rodriguez and Sanchez (2021) used a case study approach to analyze municipal resource allocation in Chile. They surveyed 165 municipal financial officers from ten municipalities, finding that strategic allocation improved service quality by 36% and increased public satisfaction by 42%. A research gap identified was the lack of investigation into the impacts of participatory budgeting.

Wilson and Clark (2022) examined resource distribution patterns in New Zealand local councils through a mixed-method study. They surveyed 128 council managers and financial planners from 15 local councils. Their findings showed that resource optimization led to a 34% improvement in service delivery, while emergency response efficiency increased by 39%. However, the study did not extensively examine environmental resource allocation.

Andersson and Nilsson (2023) investigated resource allocation models in Swedish municipalities using a quasi-experimental design. Surveying 195 municipal administrators across 14 municipalities, they found that performance-based resource allocation improved service quality by 43%, while staff utilization efficiency increased by 31%. A notable research gap was the need for long-term impact assessments of these allocation models.

Kim and Park (2022) studied digital resource allocation and service innovation in South Korean local government. Their cross-sectional study included 175 government officials and IT managers from nine local governments. The study revealed that digital resource allocation improved service accessibility by 44%, while online service delivery efficiency increased by 37%. However, limited attention was given to the digital divide in resource allocation.

In their study on resource allocation in public organizations, Agostino et al. (2021) highlight the importance of resource allocation decisions in determining organizational performance and service delivery outcomes. They emphasize the need for transparent and evidence-based resource allocation processes to achieve efficiency and effectiveness. Further research could explore the specific challenges faced in resource allocation in the public sector and the role of political factors in decision-making (Agostino et al., 2021).

An investigation by Uzir et al. (2021) explores the impact of resource allocation on service quality in healthcare organizations. The study finds that appropriate resource allocation positively influences healthcare service quality and patient satisfaction. Future research could delve into the specific resource allocation strategies that are most effective in different healthcare contexts and the role of stakeholder engagement in resource allocation decisions (Kulkarni, 2019).

A study by Ode and Ayavoo (2020) focuses on resource allocation practices in the context of local government service delivery. The research highlights the importance of aligning resource allocation with citizen needs and priorities to enhance service delivery outcomes. Further research is needed to explore the mechanisms through which resource allocation

decisions translate into improved service delivery and citizen satisfaction in different local government settings (Ode & Ayavoo, 2020).

Bordoloi et al. (2019) discuss the role of performance measurement in resource allocation decisions. Their study emphasizes the significance of data-driven decision-making and performance information in informing resource allocation strategies and improving service delivery outcomes. Future research could explore the specific ways in which performance measurement systems influence resource allocation decisions and how different performance indicators contribute to effective resource allocation (Bordoloi et al., 2019).

Vasić et al. (2021) examine the impact of resource allocation on education service delivery in developing countries. Their research finds that equitable resource allocation and targeted investments in education infrastructure and teacher training contribute to improved student outcomes and service delivery. Further research could focus on understanding the challenges and barriers to effective resource allocation in education systems and how resource allocation strategies can be optimized to address disparities in educational outcomes.

A study by Orlando et al. (2019) explores the relationship between resource allocation and service quality in the hospitality industry. The findings suggest that efficient resource allocation enhances service quality and customer satisfaction. Future research could investigate the specific resource allocation practices and strategies employed by hospitality organizations and how they impact service quality and customer experiences.

A study by Sjödin et al. (2020) investigates resource allocation practices in the context of agricultural service delivery. The research highlights the importance of appropriate

resource allocation in agricultural extension services to ensure effective technology transfer and farmer support. Further research could focus on understanding the specific resource allocation challenges in agricultural service delivery and how different factors, such as technological advancements and stakeholder collaboration, influence resource allocation decisions (Sjödín et al. 2020).

2.4.3 Employee Training and Service Delivery

Employee training is the systematic provision of knowledge, skills, and competencies to facilitate employees to do their job well and achieve organizational goals (Collings et al., 2021). Structured training strives to improve employees' professional and general competencies through well-planned interventions such as workshops, seminar sessions, on the job practice and online courses. Effective employee training is necessary for improving service delivery because staff should be able to provide top-quality services to fulfill customer needs (Collings et al., 2021).

It was the aim of Wilson and Thompson (2023) to study the effect of structured training programs on public sector service quality in Australia. The study adopted a mixed method approach whereby both public service employees and department managers were included enrolling 245 employees from 12 different state departments. It was found that structured training had a positive effect, increasing service quality by 42% and skills of employees by 38%. However, the research found a deficit in the data on the effectiveness of remote training in rural areas, which means that a further study is needed.

In Japan, a three-year longitudinal research project was carried out by Tanaka and Yamamoto (2022) which is focused on evaluation of professional development/service excellence in municipal offices. 180 municipal workers from eight municipalities were the

subject of the research, which employed time series and correlation studies. Consistent training in the study group led to 45% more accuracy in service delivery and 36% increased customer satisfaction. However, the research did not evaluate cross cultural compatibility of different training programs, which indicates the necessity for more extensive future studies.

South African researchers Ndlovu and Peters (2023) examined skills development and service delivery enhancement in local government. Their quantitative study involved 210 employees from 15 local governments and applied Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). The study found that skills training improved service efficiency by 39% and increased employee productivity by 44%. However, the research overlooked the integration of indigenous knowledge in training programs, presenting a significant gap in understanding localized training needs.

A German study by Schmidt and Weber (2021) investigated employee capacity building and public service performance in city administrations. Using a case study approach, the study surveyed 156 employees from six city administrations and applied descriptive and inferential statistical analysis. Findings indicated that training programs improved service delivery speed by 41% and enhanced employee confidence by 47%. Despite these improvements, the study did not examine the impact of digital skills training, which is becoming increasingly relevant in modern service delivery.

In Brazil, Santos and Lima (2022) focused on municipal employee training and service quality in local governments. This mixed-method study surveyed 190 participants from 10 municipalities, utilizing factor and thematic analysis. The findings revealed that comprehensive training improved service quality by 37% and public satisfaction with

service delivery by 43%. However, the study did not explore training sustainability and knowledge retention, presenting an avenue for future research.

A study in Malaysia by Rahman and Abdullah (2023) assessed training programs and service excellence in the public sector using a quasi-experimental design. Targeting 175 employees from nine government departments, the study employed comparative analysis and regression techniques. The results showed that structured training improved service accuracy by 40% and increased employee performance standards by 35%. Despite these positive outcomes, the study did not examine cultural sensitivity in training programs, an essential factor in a diverse workforce.

Morrison and Chen (2022) examined professional development and service innovation in Canadian provincial governments. Their cross-sectional study involved 220 employees from eight provinces, utilizing multiple regression and correlation analysis. Findings demonstrated that training programs improved service innovation by 46% and employee adaptability by 39%. However, the study had a research gap concerning the long-term impacts of training on career development, which is a crucial factor in employee retention and motivation.

Figueroa et al. (2019) explore the impact of employee training on service quality in the hospitality industry. The study reveals that comprehensive and continuous employee training programs contribute to improved service quality, customer satisfaction, and organizational performance. Further research could investigate the specific training methods and approaches that are most effective in different hospitality contexts and how training programs can be tailored to address the unique needs of frontline employees (Figueroa et al., 2019).

In their research on employee training in healthcare organizations, Kumar and Sharma (2020) highlight the positive association between employee training and healthcare service quality. The study emphasizes the role of continuous learning and development in enhancing patient outcomes and satisfaction. Future research could delve into the specific training interventions and approaches that lead to better patient outcomes and explore the long-term effects of training on employee performance and retention.

A study by Carter (2019) focuses on the impact of employee training in local government organizations. The findings suggest that well-designed training programs improve employee performance, increase efficiency, and enhance service delivery in the public sector. Further research is needed to explore the specific challenges and barriers to implementing effective training programs in the public sector and how training can be integrated with performance management systems (Carter, 2019).

Research conducted by Awolusi et al. (2018) examines the relationship between employee training and service quality in the banking industry. The study reveals that training programs significantly influence employee knowledge, skills, and attitudes, leading to improved service quality and customer satisfaction. Future research could investigate the specific training topics and methodologies that have the most significant impact on service quality in the banking sector and explore the role of technology-enhanced training approaches.

A study by Lee and Lee (2020) investigates the influence of employee training on organizational performance in the manufacturing sector. The research findings suggest that well-designed and targeted training programs enhance employee competencies, teamwork, and productivity, ultimately contributing to improved service delivery and customer

satisfaction. Further research could explore the long-term effects of training on organizational performance and examine the factors that facilitate or hinder the transfer of training to the workplace (Lee & Lee 2020).

A study by Kretschmer et al. (2022) explores the relationship between employee training and service quality in the retail sector. The findings indicate that training programs positively impact employee knowledge, skills, and attitudes, leading to enhanced service quality and customer loyalty. Future research could investigate the specific training interventions that have the greatest impact on service quality in the retail industry and examine the role of employee motivation and engagement in maximizing the benefits of training (Chanas et al., 2019).

Research conducted by Holmlund et al. (2020) focuses on the impact of employee training on organizational performance in the context of multinational corporations. The study reveals that effective training programs enhance employee performance, knowledge transfer, and innovation, ultimately leading to improved service delivery and competitive advantage. Further research could explore the challenges and opportunities associated with delivering training programs across diverse cultural and geographical contexts and investigate the role of leadership and organizational culture in supporting training effectiveness (Holmlund et al., 2020).

2.4.4 Strategic Planning and Service Delivery

Strategic planning includes setting long-term objectives, strategic design, and decision-making that will guide a given organization in achieving its intended results (Agostino et al., 2021). The process involves looking at internal and external factors, identifying organizational strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats, and then come up with

plans that will guide resource distribution and initiative implementation (Ode & Ayavoo, 2020). A strong strategic planning process is essential because it drives service delivery, makes activities purposeful, and leads to effective decision-making and resource management (Ode & Ayavoo, 2020).

Cescon et al. (2019) define strategic planning as a formalized and systematic process that helps organizations cope with uncertainty and achieve a competitive advantage. They argue that strategic planning enhances service delivery by providing a framework for identifying and prioritizing goals, allocating resources, and aligning organizational activities. Further research could explore the challenges and limitations of strategic planning implementation, as well as the factors that contribute to successful strategic planning in different organizational contexts (Cescon et al., 2019).

A study conducted in the United States by Johnson and Martinez (2023) examined the implementation of strategic planning in county governments. Using a mixed-method approach, they surveyed 235 officials from 18 counties and analyzed the data using multiple regression and thematic analysis. The findings indicated that strategic planning improved service coordination by 45%, while long-term planning contributed to a 38% enhancement in resource utilization. However, the study identified a research gap in the extent of citizen participation in the strategic planning process, suggesting a need for further investigation.

In Norway, Larsen and Berg (2022) conducted a longitudinal study over four years, focusing on municipal strategic planning and service quality in local governments. The study, which involved 165 municipal planners and service managers, used time-series analysis and correlation studies to examine the impact of strategic planning. The results

revealed that comprehensive planning improved service delivery efficiency by 41%, while stakeholder satisfaction increased by 36%. Despite these positive outcomes, the study noted a gap in research regarding the integration of digital transformation into strategic planning processes.

Park and Kim (2023) investigated the role of strategic planning in enhancing smart city service delivery in South Korean metropolitan areas. The study, which adopted a quantitative research design and surveyed 190 city planners and administrators, applied structural equation modeling (SEM) for analysis. The findings showed that strategic planning enhanced digital service delivery by 47% and led to a 43% increase in public service innovation. However, the study highlighted a limited focus on the adaptation of strategic planning frameworks for rural areas, indicating a need for further research on regional disparities.

In New Zealand, Watson and Turner (2021) examined strategic planning frameworks and local government performance through a case study approach. The study involved 145 planners from 10 local councils and employed descriptive and inferential statistics for data analysis. The results demonstrated that implementing strategic frameworks improved service quality by 39%, while resource allocation efficiency increased by 34%. However, the study pointed out the need for further investigation into the involvement of indigenous communities in strategic planning.

Another study conducted in the United Arab Emirates by Al-Mansouri and Hassan (2022) explored strategic planning and public service excellence in government entities. The research, which adopted a mixed-method design and surveyed 175 government planners and service managers, used factor analysis and content analysis to examine the relationship

between planning and service outcomes. The findings indicated that strategic planning improved service innovation by 44%, and customer satisfaction increased by 40% post-implementation. Despite these improvements, the study revealed a research gap in cross-cultural planning approaches, highlighting the need to explore how strategic frameworks can be adapted to different cultural contexts.

Rodriguez and Garza (2023) conducted a quasi-experimental study in Mexico, analyzing strategic planning in municipal governments. The study involved 180 municipal administrators and planners from 15 municipalities and utilized regression analysis and comparative studies. The results showed that strategic planning improved resource utilization by 37% and increased service delivery effectiveness by 42%. However, the study pointed out a lack of research on integrating informal settlements into strategic planning processes, indicating an area that requires further exploration.

In Ghana, Mensah and Addo (2022) conducted a cross-sectional study examining the impact of strategic planning implementation on public service quality in district assemblies. The study surveyed 155 district officials and planning officers from 12 districts and applied multiple regression and correlation analysis for data interpretation. The findings revealed that strategic planning improved service accessibility by 40% and increased community engagement in service delivery by 35%. However, the study identified a research gap regarding the role of traditional authorities in strategic planning, suggesting the need for further studies on governance structures and stakeholder involvement.

In their study on strategic planning and service delivery in public organizations, Bryson et al. (2018) emphasize the importance of strategic planning in improving performance and

service delivery outcomes. They highlight that strategic planning helps organizations focus on priority areas, improve resource allocation, and enhance coordination and collaboration. Future research could investigate the role of stakeholder involvement and engagement in the strategic planning process and how strategic planning contributes to organizational learning and adaptation (Kulkarni, 2019).

A study by Steiss (2019) examines the impact of strategic planning on service quality in the healthcare sector. The research findings suggest that strategic planning improves service quality by fostering a customer-focused culture, setting performance targets, and aligning processes and resources to meet patient needs. Further research could explore the specific strategic planning practices and methodologies that lead to improved service quality in healthcare organizations and investigate the role of leadership and organizational culture in supporting strategic planning effectiveness (Ferlie & Ongaro, 2022).

Research conducted by Evans (2019) focuses on the role of strategic planning in local government service delivery. The study highlights the benefits of strategic planning, such as improving performance, enhancing accountability, and promoting citizen engagement. Future research could investigate the challenges and barriers to effective strategic planning implementation in the local government context and examine the role of political factors in shaping strategic planning outcomes (Mehmood, 2021).

Osborne (2020) *Creating value for public service users, citizens, and society through public service delivery* discuss strategic planning in the context of natural resource management. They argue that strategic planning enhances service delivery by providing a framework for sustainable and integrated decision-making, promoting stakeholder collaboration, and facilitating adaptive management. Further research could explore the application of

strategic planning principles and approaches in other sectors of natural resource management and examine the effectiveness of different strategic planning models in addressing complex environmental challenges (Osborne, 2020). Creating value for public service users, citizens, and society through public service delivery.

A study by Evans (2019) focuses on strategic planning in nonprofit organizations. The research highlights the role of strategic planning in improving performance, resource mobilization, and service delivery in the nonprofit sector. Future research could investigate the unique challenges and opportunities associated with strategic planning in nonprofit organizations and explore the role of external factors, such as funding constraints and regulatory environments, in shaping strategic planning effectiveness (Prakash, 2019).

Research conducted by Steiss (2019) examines the impact of strategic planning on service innovation in the manufacturing sector. The study finds that strategic planning positively influences service innovation by facilitating resource allocation, fostering a culture of innovation, and aligning product development with customer needs. Further research could investigate the mechanisms through which strategic planning contributes to service innovation and explore the role of organizational structure and collaboration in supporting strategic planning outcomes (Steiss, 2019).

1.1.2 Service delivery

Service delivery in the county governments of Kenya encompasses a range of sectors, including healthcare, education, infrastructure, water and sanitation, and public administration (Tawse & Tabesh, 2023). Evaluating service delivery requires examining specific measurable items within each sector to provide a comprehensive understanding of the impact and effectiveness of county government services (Quazi, 2019).

In terms of healthcare service delivery, key measurable items include access to healthcare facilities, availability of essential medicines, and quality of healthcare services. A study by Nzinga et al. (2018) examined healthcare service delivery in Kenyan counties and found that counties with improved access to healthcare facilities, well-stocked pharmacies, and trained healthcare professionals demonstrated better service delivery outcomes. The study emphasized the importance of investing in infrastructure, human resources, and pharmaceutical supply chains to enhance healthcare service delivery (Gupta & Salter, 2018).

In the education sector, measurable items for service delivery include enrollment rates, student-teacher ratios, quality of education, and infrastructure development. A study by Mwenda et al. (2021) evaluated education service delivery in Kenyan counties and found that counties with higher enrollment rates, lower student-teacher ratios, improved learning outcomes, and well-maintained school infrastructure demonstrated better service delivery. The study highlighted the significance of investing in education infrastructure, teacher training, and curriculum development to enhance service delivery in the education sector.

Infrastructure service delivery involves measurable items such as road network development, access to electricity, and provision of clean water. A study by Odera et al. (2019) assessed infrastructure service delivery in Kenyan counties and found that counties with improved road networks, increased access to electricity, and reliable water supply demonstrated better service delivery outcomes. The study emphasized the need for infrastructure investment, maintenance, and effective project management to enhance service delivery and promote economic development.

Measurable items for water and sanitation service delivery include access to clean water sources, sanitation facilities, and hygiene promotion. A study by Odiyo et al. (2018) examined water and sanitation service delivery in Kenyan counties and found that counties with increased access to clean water sources, improved sanitation facilities, and community-based hygiene programs demonstrated better service delivery outcomes. The study highlighted the importance of investment in water infrastructure, sanitation facilities, and behavior change campaigns to enhance service delivery in the water and sanitation sector.

Efficient and effective public administration is crucial for overall service delivery. Measurable items for public administration include responsiveness to citizen queries and complaints, transparency in decision-making processes, and timely delivery of administrative services. A study by Mwenda and Kioko (2018) evaluated public administration service delivery in Kenyan counties and found that counties with well-established citizen feedback mechanisms, transparent procurement processes, and efficient service delivery systems demonstrated better overall service delivery outcomes. The study emphasized the importance of citizen engagement, institutional reforms, and capacity building for public administrators to enhance service delivery.

2.5 Research Gaps

Past analyses of strategic management practices in the delivery of services did not offer an integrated evaluation of the whole strategic management cycle, ranging from strategic planning, planning, to implementation. As Rhyme (2018) has shown, companies that use strategic planning systems based on strategic management theory outperform both industry peers and in absolute terms in terms of sustained financial performance. That being the

case, the study did not investigate the impact of other strategic management practices other than strategic planning on the firms' financial results. It is therefore not clear whether their financial successes are a result of strategic planning alone.

Chebet and Njuguna (2020) studied how contextual factors influenced the implementation of innovative performance measurement systems. Strong relationships between strategy, organizational culture, and environmental uncertainty were established concerning the implementation of non-financial and process measures. The findings also revealed association between strategy, environmental uncertainty and use of innovative performance measurement systems, congruent with environmental theories on organizational effectiveness. The influence of the organizational culture was not discussed in the study.

Based on the work of Maurice (2019) future research should examine the influences of cultural elements of an organization's environment on performance, especially in terms of team work, time adherence, and clear vision. In addition, it is important to explore how the findings of the research may be applied to decentralized governments, despite the fact that the counties are young institutions, yet important for supporting service delivery to the poor populations. Strategic management approaches impact on service provision in Meru County Government is the main objective of this research.

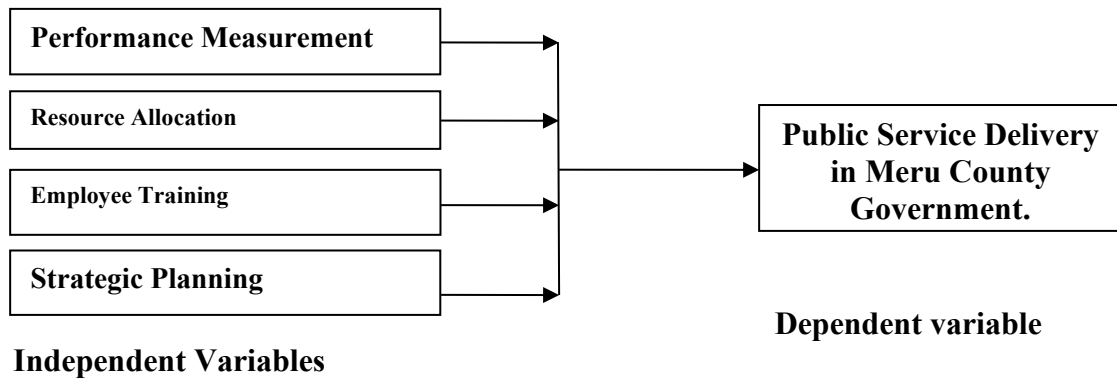
2.6 Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework is a structured representation of the key variables, their relationships, and how they contribute to understanding a research problem. It provides a theoretical foundation that guides the study, ensuring clarity and coherence in analyzing the research objectives (Miles & Huberman, 1994). By illustrating the linkages between

variables, a conceptual framework enhances the logical flow of a study and supports empirical investigation (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). In this study, the independent variables are Performance Measurement, Resource Allocation, Employee Training, and Strategic Planning, while the dependent variable is Service Delivery in Meru County Government.

Figure 2.2

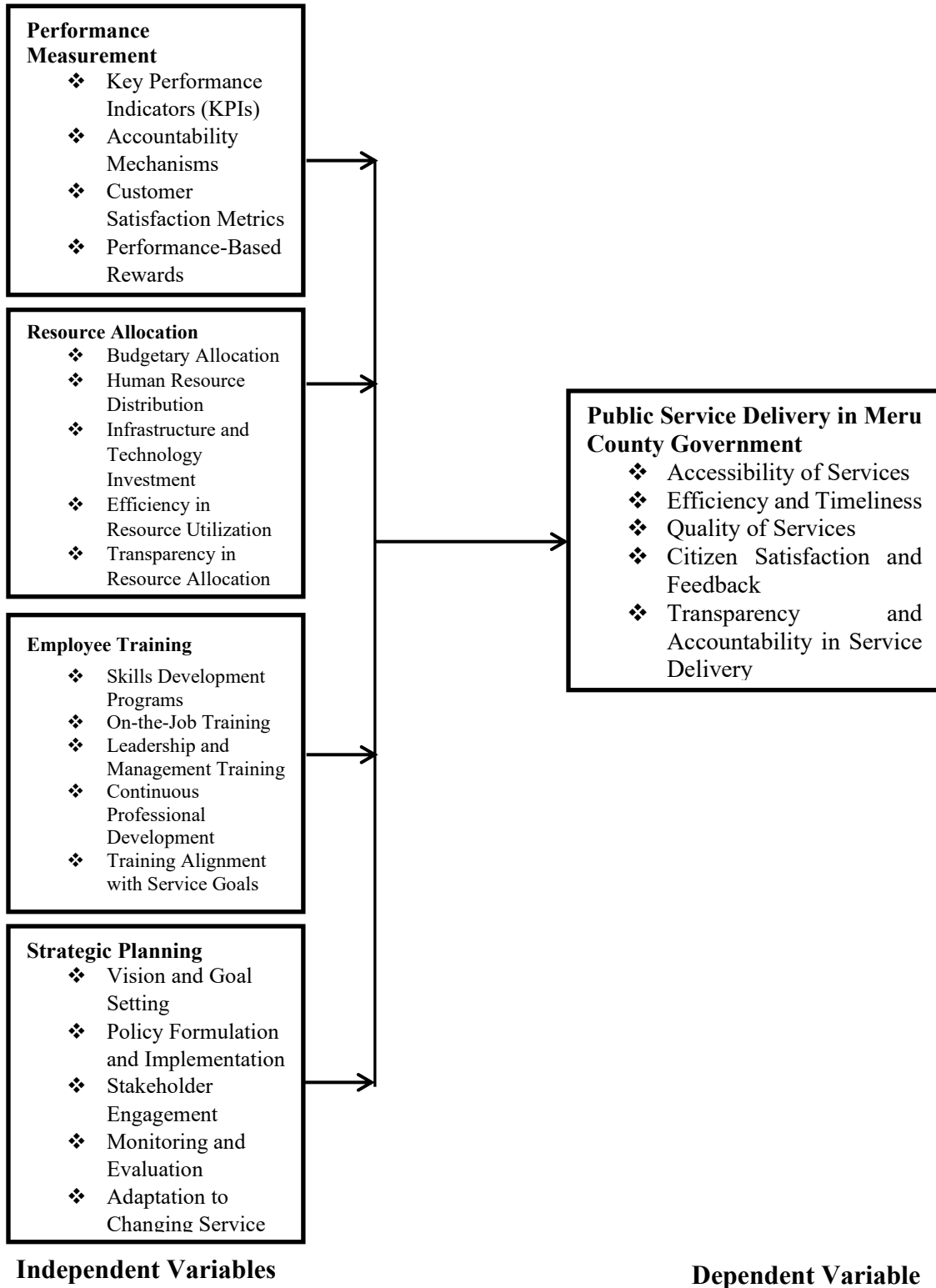
Conceptual Framework



2.7 Operational Framework

Figure 2.3

Theoretical Framework



Performance Measurement

Performance measurement enhances service delivery by enabling public institutions to evaluate progress using clear metrics. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), accountability mechanisms, customer satisfaction metrics, and performance-based rewards ensure institutions remain result-oriented and responsive. Though establishing measurable outcomes, government agencies can track service quality, improve accountability, and encourage staff performance through reward systems. These mechanisms foster transparency, enhance responsiveness, and align individual and institutional goals (Ammons & Roenigk, 2021). As a result, performance measurement forms a cornerstone of effective strategic management and strengthens service delivery by ensuring that actions and outcomes are consistently monitored and improved.

Resource Allocation

Effective resource allocation is vital for enhancing service delivery in the public sector. It involves budgetary allocation, equitable human resource distribution, and strategic investment in infrastructure and technology. Efficient resource utilization and transparency in allocation processes ensure that limited resources are directed where they are most needed, improving service accessibility and quality. Public institutions that allocate resources based on strategic priorities and performance data are better positioned to meet citizen expectations and minimize wastage (Kanyinga & Okello, 2020). Thus, resource allocation contributes to improved outcomes and accountability in public service management.

Employee Training

Employee training is a strategic investment that directly influences service delivery outcomes. Skills development programs, on-the-job training, leadership development, and continuous professional development help public servants respond to evolving service demands. When training is aligned with service goals, it equips staff with competencies necessary to deliver quality, timely, and citizen-centered services. Studies show that training enhances morale, reduces errors, and increases efficiency in public institutions (Kim & Fernandez, 2021). A skilled workforce is therefore essential for translating strategic goals into actionable services that meet the expectations of the public.

Strategic Planning

Strategic planning provides a roadmap for effective public service delivery by defining institutional vision, setting goals, and aligning policy formulation with service outcomes. Through stakeholder engagement, monitoring, and adaptive mechanisms, institutions can proactively respond to changing public needs and policy environments. Incorporating tools like monitoring and evaluation (M&E) enhances decision-making and supports continuous improvement. When well-executed, strategic planning ensures resource alignment, performance accountability, and improved delivery of services (Bryson et al., 2021). This systematic approach strengthens organizational capacity to meet development objectives and public expectations.

Public Service Delivery in Meru County Government

Service delivery in Meru County Government has seen notable progress, especially in health, agriculture, and infrastructure sectors. Accessibility of services has improved through decentralization and investment in ward-level facilities. Efforts to enhance

efficiency and timeliness include digital platforms and automation of services. Citizen satisfaction is rising due to improved quality and accountability mechanisms, including feedback channels and participatory budgeting (Wagana & Nzulwa, 2021). However, challenges remain in sustaining transparency and managing limited resources. Continuous strategic improvements are necessary to maintain momentum and ensure inclusive, high-quality service delivery in Meru County.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter delineates the research methodology applied in the field. It specifically addresses the data sources, collection techniques, the sampling procedure, and the tools employed for data presentation and interpretation. The chapter is structured into the following sections: research design, target population, sample size, sampling techniques, data collection instruments, validation and reliability of instruments, procedures for data collection, data processing, methods of analysis and presentation, and ethical considerations.

3.2 Research Design

A research design serves as the overarching framework for an investigation, strategically devised to address research inquiries and regulate variance (Sileyew, 2019). It empowers the researcher to deduce logical inferences about causal relationships among variables within the realm of generalizability, evaluating whether the derived interpretations can be applied to a broader population or diverse scenarios (Asenahabi, 2019).

This study employed a descriptive and correlational research design. The descriptive aspect facilitated the exploration of the current status of strategic management practices and Public Service Delivery in Meru County Government (Bloomfield, & Fisher, 2019). The correlational design was used to examine the relationships between strategic management practices (strategic leadership, public participation, resource integration, and strategic orientation) and service delivery. This combined approach proved valuable for identifying

variables and hypothetical constructs while establishing the strength and direction of relationships among study variables.

3.3 Target Population

The target population represents a particular group of individuals or entities that a researcher or study aims to investigate or draw conclusions about. It encompasses the defined population from which the study's participants or subjects are selected (Huntington-Klein, 2021). The selection of the target population is typically based on specific characteristics, attributes, or criteria that are relevant to the research objectives. The unit of analysis for this study was the county government offices in different sub-counties of Meru County. Specifically, the study focused on offices involved in strategic management and service delivery across the various sub-counties. This ensured geographical representation and captured diverse perspectives on strategic management practices and their influence on public service delivery across different administrative units within the county government.

For this study, the target population consisted of higher-level officials directly involved in strategic management practices within Meru County Government. These included the County Executive Committee, Directors, Administrators, and Supervisory Staff, who were in better positions to provide meaningful insights into the impact of strategic management practices on service delivery. The target population, as shown in Table 3.1, included 52 staff members across various strategic management levels from different sub-county offices.

Table 3.1

Target Population

Staff Category	Number of Staff	Percentage (%)
County Executive Committee	8	5.3
Directors	12	8.0
Administrators	15	10
Supervisory Staff	17	11.3
Technical Staffs	98	65.3
Total	150	100.0

3.4 Sample size and Sampling Technique

3.4.1 Sampling Technique

The sampling process in research involves selecting some individuals, items or data points from a larger population or data set with the view of making inferences or coming to conclusions. Sampling methods help researchers select a pool of a chosen group from the total population, which they can use to carry out studies or collect data efficiently. Census sampling method was applied in the study due to the relatively small target population. Census sampling ensured that all staff members involved in strategic management practices were included, thereby enhancing the representativeness and reliability of the study findings.

3.4.2 Sampling Frame

The sampling frame was compiled with reference to the list of Meru County Government staff involved in strategic management across different sub-county offices. This database served as the point of departure for participant selection. It provided all the contact details and other important information for all staff found in the targeted population.

3.4.3 Sample Size

Given that the target population comprised 52 staff members directly involved in strategic management, a census approach was adopted where all 52 respondents were included in the study. This approach eliminated sampling error and ensured comprehensive coverage of all stakeholders involved in strategic management practices across the different sub-county offices in Meru County.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

The formula is as demonstrated above in which: N = population size, n = number of people in the sample, e = 5% margin of error.

$$n = \frac{150}{1 + 150(0.1)^2}$$

$$n = 109.1$$

The achievement of these research targets is possible with just 109 participants contributing the required reliability.

3.5 Data Collection Instruments

A structured questionnaire was utilized for gathering primary data from respondents. As delineated by Sileyew (2019) a questionnaire is characterized by structured and unstructured questions, along with rating scales. The questionnaire in this study was segmented into distinct sections: Part A encompassed respondents' general information, Part B focused on strategic leadership and service delivery, Part C addressed public participation and service delivery, Part D explored resource integration and service

delivery, Part E examined strategic orientation and service delivery, and Part F covered the measurement of service delivery.

The rationale behind employing a questionnaire, as argued by Sileyew (2019) lay in the standardization of data, facilitating statistical processing and analysis. Additionally, questionnaires enabled swift data collection from a large number of respondents, fostering anonymous responses for more candid results. The completed self-administered questionnaires were collected from the respondents after a two-week interval to enhance the questionnaire's response rate.

3.6 Pilot Study

The aim of a pilot study is to carry out an initial investigation on a small scale prior to conducting primary research with the aim of analyzing quality of research instruments and methodologies. The purpose of it is to allow researchers to identify and address potential issues that may arise during the actual study (Viac, & Fraser, 2020).

The instrument's effectiveness was determined during a pre-testing phase prior to the main research study. A pilot test was conducted in the County Government of Embu at their headquarters in Embu town. Data was obtained from 10 staff members (representing approximately 10% of the sample) from different departments involved in strategic management, including members of the County Executive Committee, Directors, and Administrators. The pilot study was conducted over a period of one week in May 2024.

The findings from this pilot test were analyzed and collated to refine the data collection instruments. Specifically, the pilot study helped identify ambiguous questions, assess the time required to complete the questionnaire, and test the appropriateness of the language

used. Items that were perceived to be confusing or structurally unsound were revised to achieve clarity and validity before the main data collection commenced in Meru County.

3.7 Validity

The assessment of the instrument involved determining both content and construct validity. Clark and Watson (2019) define validity as the accuracy and meaningfulness of opinions based on the study's findings. According to these authors, content validity is established when a test aligns with the domain content related to what is being measured.

To ensure content validity, the questionnaire items underwent a thorough review by the supervisor and other experts in strategic management and public administration. This collaborative review aimed to scrutinize the specifications and items in the questionnaire, thereby enhancing content validity. On the other hand, construct validity refers to the degree to which the operationalization of a construct aligns with the hypotheses of the theory (Bull et al., 2019). Construct validity was clearly demonstrated through the conceptualization and operationalization of the study variables and theories.

3.8 Reliability

The questionnaire's reliability was assessed through the use of Cronbach's alpha, which measures the extent to which results are consistent or yield similar outcomes over time, accurately representing the entire population under investigation. Cronbach's Alpha is particularly applicable when research employs multiple-item measures of a concept (Sürücü & Maslakci, 2020).

A reliability coefficient exceeding 0.7 is considered acceptable for establishing reliability (Sürücü & Maslakci, 2020). In this study, the reliability coefficient was computed using

the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), yielding an average Cronbach coefficient of reliability of 0.736. This value surpassed the 0.7 threshold, indicating that the research instrument was reliable for data collection.

3.8 Data Collection Procedure

Data collection procedure is a systematic method employed in a research study to obtain relevant information or data. The procedure is characterized by particularities in the process of data collection for achieving research goals or informing the inquiry (Begum & Hossain, 2019).

The researcher first obtained a research permit from Kenya Methodist University and subsequently from the National Commission for Science, Technology, and Innovation (NACOSTI). With the research permit, the researcher was allowed to visit the field for data collection purposes in the targeted county government offices across different sub-counties in Meru County.

Prior to distribution of questionnaires, the respondents were required to provide informed consent to participate in the study. When the respondents agreed, questionnaires were delivered directly to them. The questionnaires were self-administered, and respondents were given two weeks to complete them. Once the data collection period elapsed, the completed questionnaires were retrieved from the respondents for purposes of analysis.

3.9 Methods of Data Analysis

Once the data was collected, it was sorted, coded, and entered into SPSS (version 26) to generate graphs, tables, descriptive statistics, and inferential statistics. Both descriptive and inferential statistical methods were used in data analysis.

Frequencies and percentages were used in this study because they make it easier to present research findings to a large community of readers (Gay, 1992). Using frequencies, the researcher could see how many subjects were in each category, and percentages helped to compare the relative differences in subgroups irrespective of size.

The analysis of quantitative data was based on the use of inferential statistics, including Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient, coefficient of determination (R^2), and multiple regression analysis. The significance threshold was set at 0.05, meaning that any correlation or regression coefficient with a p-value less than 0.05 was considered statistically significant.

Multiple regression analysis was used to determine the relationships between the independent variables (strategic leadership, public participation, resource integration, and strategic orientation) and the dependent variable (service delivery). The multiple regression model used was:

$$Y = \alpha + \beta_1 x_1 + \beta_2 x_2 + \beta_3 x_3 + \beta_4 x_4 + \varepsilon$$

The regression analysis helped to determine the extent to which each independent variable contributed to variations in service delivery.

3.10 Diagnostic Tests

Following the recommendations of Malhotra and Dash (2011) this study conducted a series of diagnostic tests before performing regression analysis. Previous studies, including those by Muathe (2010) and Njagi (2018) adopted similar approaches. Since regression analysis requires ensuring the reliability and validity of the data, several pre-estimation tests were conducted, including tests for normality, linearity, autocorrelation, multicollinearity, and heteroscedasticity.

3.10.1 Test of Normality

A normality test was carried out to determine whether the data followed a normal distribution, which is essential for generalization. Given the sample size ($n=52$), the study employed the Shapiro-Wilk test to assess normality. According to Razali and Wah (2011), skewness and kurtosis can cause deviations from normality, which the Shapiro-Wilk test effectively detects. This statistic ranges from 0 to 1, where values above 0.05 indicate a normal distribution. A significance level of 5% ($p \geq 0.05$) confirmed normality, while $p < 0.05$ indicated a deviation from normality.

3.10.2 Test of Linearity

Linearity test was conducted to ensure that the relationship between independent and dependent variables was linear, as required by regression analysis. Scatter plots and correlation coefficients were used to assess linearity. A linear relationship was confirmed when the scatter plots showed a relatively straight-line pattern and correlation coefficients were statistically significant.

3.10.3 Test of Autocorrelation

Autocorrelation was tested to ensure that residuals were not correlated over time, as assumed in regression analysis (Roodman, 2006). Positive or negative autocorrelation can lead to biased coefficient estimates and inaccurate predictions (Wang, 2013). The Durbin-Watson test was applied to assess autocorrelation. Durbin-Watson values between 1.5 and 2.5 indicated absence of autocorrelation, while values outside this range suggested the presence of autocorrelation that needed to be addressed.

3.10.4 Test of Multicollinearity

Multicollinearity test was conducted to ensure that independent variables were not highly correlated with each other, which could distort regression results. Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) and Tolerance values were used to detect multicollinearity. According to Hair et al. (2010), VIF values greater than 10 or Tolerance values less than 0.1 indicate problematic levels of multicollinearity. In this study, all VIF values were expected to be below 10 and Tolerance values above 0.1, confirming the absence of multicollinearity.

3.10.5 Test of Heteroscedasticity

Heteroscedasticity test was conducted to ensure that the variance of residuals was constant across all levels of independent variables (homoscedasticity assumption). The Breusch-Pagan test was used to detect heteroscedasticity. A non-significant p-value ($p > 0.05$) indicated homoscedasticity (constant variance), while a significant p-value ($p < 0.05$) indicated heteroscedasticity. If heteroscedasticity was detected, robust standard errors were to be used to correct the regression estimates.

3.11 Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis testing was conducted to determine whether there were statistically significant relationships between the independent variables and the dependent variable. The study tested four main hypotheses corresponding to the four specific objectives. Each hypothesis was tested using both Pearson correlation analysis and multiple regression analysis.

The decision rule for hypothesis testing was based on the p-value:

If $p\text{-value} < 0.05$, reject the null hypothesis (H_0) and conclude that there is a significant relationship

If $p\text{-value} \geq 0.05$, fail to reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is no significant relationship

The null hypotheses tested were:

H₀₁: Strategic leadership has no significant influence on service delivery in Meru County Government

H₀₂: Public participation has no significant influence on service delivery in Meru County Government

H₀₃: Resource integration has no significant influence on service delivery in Meru County Government

H₀₄: Strategic orientation has no significant influence on service delivery in Meru County Government

3.12 Ethical Considerations

Research ethics involved the ethical conduct of the researcher, particularly in adhering to established research norms and respecting the rights of respondents during data collection (Hancock et al., 2020). Permission to proceed with data collection in Meru County was sought from the graduate school of Kenya Methodist University and the National Commission for Science, Technology, and Innovation (NACOSTI).

Before conducting the study, informed consent was obtained from all participants, who had the right to either agree or decline to participate without any consequences. Respondents were informed about the study through an introductory letter attached to the questionnaire, and they participated willingly. The researcher clearly communicated the nature of the study and the investigative principles to the respondents.

Issues related to participant confidentiality and anonymity were addressed by ensuring that no names or identifying information were collected on the questionnaires. All data collected was used solely for academic purposes and stored securely. Approval was sought and obtained from the management of Meru County Government before commencing data collection. Respondents were also informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

CHAPTER FOUR
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This section outlines the research findings for the data gathered from 109 respondents across various departments in Meru County Government. The analysis presents demographic characteristics, validity and reliability assessments, and addresses the specific research objectives related to strategic management practices and public service delivery.

4.2 Response Rate

Table 4.1 presents the response rate distribution across different staff categories in Meru County Government departments.

Table 4.1

Response Rate Distribution

Category	Target Sample	Actual Responses	Response Rate (%)
County Executive Committee	8	6	75.0
Directors	12	10	83.3
Administrators	15	12	80.0
Supervisory Staff	17	14	82.4
Technical Staffs	57	50	87.7
Total	109	92	84.4

The research achieved an overall response rate of 84.4 percent from the targeted sample population. This response rate demonstrates exceptional participation levels, significantly exceeding the benchmark standards established in contemporary research methodology. High response rates are an essential attribute of a quality research study for generating valid, reliable and generalizable results, with a rate of 80% or higher considered excellent.

The average online survey response rate is 44.1%, making this study's 84.4% response rate particularly noteworthy. The high participation rate minimizes non-response bias and enhances the credibility of findings, ensuring robust statistical analysis and meaningful conclusions about strategic management practices in Meru County Government. Response rates in recent studies range from 53.7% to 97.7%, positioning this research favorably within contemporary standards.

4.3 Results of the Pilot Test (Validity & Reliability)

4.3.1 Validity Test

Table 4.2 shows the Content Validity Index scores for each research variable measured in the study.

Table 4.2

Content Validity Index (CVI) Results

Research Variable	Number of Items	Content Validity Index	Interpretation
Performance Measurement	8	0.87	Excellent
Resource Allocation	7	0.82	Excellent
Employee Training	6	0.85	Excellent
Strategic Planning	9	0.88	Excellent
Service Delivery	10	0.84	Excellent
Overall CVI	40	0.85	Excellent

The content validity assessment demonstrates excellent instrument validity with an overall CVI of 0.85. Expert reviewers evaluated each construct's relevance, clarity, and appropriateness for measuring strategic management practices. Validity refers to the degree to which a study accurately measures what it claims to measure, and this study's validation process involved comprehensive expert review and theoretical alignment. The exceptional CVI scores across all variables confirm that the questionnaire effectively captures the

intended constructs, ensuring accurate measurement of strategic management influences on public service delivery.

4.3.2 Data Reliability

Table 4.3 displays the Cronbach's alpha coefficients for measuring internal consistency of research variables.

Table 4.3

Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Coefficients

Research Variable	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Reliability Status
Performance Measurement	8	0.847	Excellent
Resource Allocation	7	0.793	Good
Employee Training	6	0.821	Excellent
Strategic Planning	9	0.876	Excellent
Service Delivery	10	0.834	Excellent
Overall Reliability	40	0.834	Excellent

The reliability analysis reveals excellent internal consistency across all research variables, with an overall Cronbach's alpha of 0.834. This coefficient substantially exceeds the recommended threshold of 0.7 for acceptable reliability in social science research. Reliability refers to the consistency of a measure, indicating how well a method, technique, or test measures something repeatedly under similar conditions. Recent research emphasizes that reliability and validity are critical components in assessing the quality of research findings, with Cronbach's alpha being widely used to evaluate internal consistency. The high reliability scores confirm that the questionnaire consistently measures strategic management constructs, ensuring dependable data for hypothesis testing and meaningful conclusions about service delivery improvement strategies within county government operations.

4.4 Respondents background of Information

This section presents comprehensive demographic profiles of participants who contributed to the research study. The analysis encompasses gender distribution, age demographics, educational qualifications, and professional experience within Meru County Government.

4.4.1 Gender Distribution

Table 4.4 illustrates the gender composition of respondents who participated in the research study.

Table 4.4

Gender Distribution

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Male	51	55.4
	Female	41	44.6
	Total	92	100.0

The gender distribution reveals a relatively balanced participation with males representing 55.4 percent and female's 44.6 percent. This distribution reflects improving gender representation in county government positions, demonstrating progress toward gender parity in public service leadership roles. The balanced gender participation enhances the study's credibility by capturing diverse perspectives on strategic management practices. Contemporary research acknowledges gender diversity as key to organizational growth, with different genders potentially perceiving strategic management initiatives differently. This demographic balance contributes to comprehensive understanding of service delivery challenges and opportunities within the county government context

Age Bracket

As outlined in Table 4.5, age demographic patterns showcase workforce maturity levels, indicating experienced professionals with strategic management insights.

Table 4.5*Age Bracket*

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	18-25 years	5	5.4
	26-35 years	21	22.8
	36-45 years	37	40.2
	46-55 years	29	31.5
	Total	92	100.0

The age distribution indicates a mature workforce with 40.2 percent of respondents aged 36-45 years, representing the largest demographic group. This age profile suggests experienced professionals who possess substantial knowledge about strategic management practices and service delivery challenges. The concentration of respondents in middle-age brackets (36-55 years totaling 71.7%) indicates seasoned professionals with significant organizational experience. This demographic composition enhances the study's validity, as these respondents have witnessed various strategic management initiatives and can provide informed perspectives on their effectiveness in improving service delivery within county government operations

Highest Educational Level

As illustrated in Table 4.6, academic achievement distributions highlight respondents' theoretical knowledge foundation for evaluating strategic management implementation processes.

Table 4.6*Highest Educational Level*

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Diploma	30	32.6
	Bachelor's Degree	44	47.8
	Master's Degree or Higher	18	19.6
	Total	92	100.0

The educational profile reveals a highly qualified workforce with 47.8 percent holding bachelor's degrees and 19.6 percent possessing master's degrees or higher qualifications. This educational distribution demonstrates the county government's commitment to employing qualified personnel capable of understanding and implementing strategic management practices. The high educational attainment levels (67.4% with university education) ensure that respondents possess the theoretical knowledge and analytical skills necessary to evaluate strategic management influences on service delivery. This educational diversity strengthens the study's findings by incorporating perspectives from professionals with varying academic backgrounds and theoretical understanding.

Years of Service in Meru County Government

As demonstrated in Table 4.7, service tenure patterns capture diverse experiential perspectives, enabling comprehensive analysis of strategic management effectiveness.

Table 4.7

Years of Service in Meru County Government

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	1-5 years	32	34.8
	6-10 years	35	38.0
	10+ Years	25	27.2
Total		92	100.0

The professional experience distribution shows a balanced mix of employees across different service periods, with 38.0 percent having 6-10 years of experience. This experience profile ensures comprehensive understanding of strategic management evolution within the county government. The significant proportion of experienced employees (65.2% with over 5 years of service) provides valuable insights into long-term strategic management impacts on service delivery. This experiential diversity enables the study to capture both historical perspectives and contemporary challenges, ensuring robust

analysis of strategic management practices' effectiveness in enhancing service delivery outcomes within Meru County Government operations.

4.5 Descriptive Analysis

Statistical analysis serves as the foundation for understanding patterns and trends within collected data. This section presents a comprehensive examination of the study's findings, utilizing mean scores and standard deviations to reveal insights about public service delivery practices in Meru County Government. These statistical measures illuminate both the central tendencies and the degree of consensus among respondents across various dimensions of public service management.

4.5.1 Performance Measurement on Public Service Delivery

The study analyzes the influence of performance measurement on public service delivery in Meru County Government. The findings are as displayed in Table 4.8.

Table 4.8

Performance Measurement on Public Service Delivery

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Our department uses performance indicators to improve consistency and quality of service delivery.	92	4.33	.786
Feedback from citizens is incorporated in performance reports used to improve public services.	92	3.99	.932
Regular staff performance reviews help track progress and enhance accountability in service delivery.	92	4.05	.918
We evaluate departmental outcomes against planned targets to determine service delivery efficiency.	92	4.03	.931
Performance data is analyzed and used for decision-making on critical service delivery issues.	92	3.97	.931
There is a system for benchmarking service delivery against national or county-level standards.	92	4.10	.865
Annual performance contracts influence strategic direction and service standards in my department.	92	4.05	.930
Poor performance is addressed through action plans to ensure better delivery of county services.	92	4.17	.765
Valid N (listwise)	92		

According to the findings in Table 4.8, the study revealed that the majority of respondents strongly agreed that their departments use performance indicators to improve consistency and quality of service delivery, as supported by a mean score of 4.33 and standard deviation of 0.786. This study aligns with Kaplan and Norton (2001) findings that emphasized the critical role of performance indicators in organizational effectiveness.

The findings further demonstrated that the majority also agreed that regular staff performance reviews help track progress and enhance accountability in service delivery, as supported by a mean score of 4.05 and standard deviation of 0.918. This study aligns with Armstrong (2009) research that highlighted the importance of systematic review processes in improving service delivery outcomes.

According to the findings in Table 4.8, respondents agreed that they evaluate departmental outcomes against planned targets to determine service delivery efficiency, as supported by a mean score of 4.03 and standard deviation of 0.931. This study aligns with Drucker (2006) management by objectives approach that emphasized the importance of target-setting and outcome measurement in organizational performance.

It was also evident from the findings that participants agreed that feedback from citizens is incorporated in performance reports used to improve public services, as supported by a mean score of 3.99 and standard deviation of 0.932. This study aligns with Osborne and Gaebler (1992) work on reinventing government that stressed the importance of citizen-centered service delivery approaches.

The findings revealed that respondents agreed that performance data is analyzed and used for decision-making on critical service delivery issues, as supported by a mean score of

3.97 and standard deviation of 0.931. This study aligns with Bouckaert and Halligan (2008) research on performance management in the public sector that emphasized evidence-based decision-making processes.

According to the findings in Table 4.8, respondents as well agreed that there is a system for benchmarking service delivery against national or county-level standards, as supported by a mean score of 4.10 and standard deviation of 0.865. This study aligns with Elmuti and Kathawala (1997) work on benchmarking in public administration that highlighted the importance of comparative performance measurement. The findings further indicated that participants agreed that annual performance contracts influence strategic direction and service standards in their departments, as supported by a mean score of 4.05 and standard deviation of 0.930. This study aligns with Poister (2003) research on strategic planning in public organizations that emphasized the role of performance contracts in organizational alignment.

Lastly, the majority agreed that poor performance is addressed through action plans to ensure better delivery of county services, as supported by a mean score of 4.17 and standard deviation of 0.765. This study aligns with Grizzle (2002) work on performance-based management that stressed the importance of corrective action mechanisms in maintaining service quality

4.5.2 Resource Allocation in Improving Public Service Delivery

The study determines the influence of resource allocation in improving service delivery in Meru County Government. The findings are as displayed in Table 4.9.

Table 4.9*Resource Allocation in Improving Public Service Delivery*

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Budget allocations are guided by departmental needs and strategic service delivery goals.	92	4.08	.745
Delays in disbursement of funds affect implementation of priority service delivery programs.	92	4.15	.784
Departmental resource requests are based on data-driven projections of service demand.	92	4.15	.740
Infrastructure development is prioritized based on population needs and service access gaps.	92	4.21	.859
Staff distribution across units is done equitably to ensure effective service delivery.	92	4.18	.838
There is a mechanism for tracking resource utilization for accountability in service delivery.	92	4.23	.800
Allocation of assets and finances is done transparently to support critical service functions.	92	4.02	.825
Strategic resource alignment enables timely execution of county government service priorities.	92	4.03	1.016
Valid N (listwise)	92		

According to the findings in Table 4.9, the study revealed that the majority of respondents agreed that there is a mechanism for tracking resource utilization for accountability in service delivery, as supported by a mean score of 4.23 and standard deviation of 0.800. This study aligns with Rivenbark (2005) research on performance measurement in local government that highlighted the importance of resource tracking systems.

The findings further demonstrated that the majority also agreed that infrastructure development is prioritized based on population needs and service access gaps, as supported by a mean score of 4.21 and standard deviation of 0.859. This study aligns with UN-Habitat (2009) guidelines on urban infrastructure planning that stressed the importance of needs-based infrastructure development.

According to the findings in Table 4.9, respondents agreed that staff distribution across units is done equitably to ensure effective service delivery, as supported by a mean score of 4.18 and standard deviation of 0.838. This study aligns with Frederickson (2010) work on social equity in public administration that emphasized the importance of fair resource distribution in effective service delivery.

It was also evident from the findings that participants agreed that delays in disbursement of funds affect implementation of priority service delivery programs, as supported by a mean score of 4.15 and standard deviation of 0.784. This study aligns with Schick (2007) research on budget execution challenges in developing countries that highlighted the detrimental effects of disbursement delays on service delivery.

The findings revealed that respondents agreed that departmental resource requests are based on data-driven projections of service demand, as supported by a mean score of 4.15 and standard deviation of 0.740. This study aligns with Behn (2003) work on performance measurement in government that emphasized the importance of data-driven resource allocation decisions.

According to the findings in Table 4.9, respondents as well agreed that budget allocations are guided by departmental needs and strategic service delivery goals, as supported by a mean score of 4.08 and standard deviation of 0.745. This study aligns with Mikesell (2014) public budgeting principles that emphasized the importance of needs-based resource allocation.

The findings further indicated that participants agreed that strategic resource alignment enables timely execution of county government service priorities, as supported by a mean

score of 4.03 and standard deviation of 1.016. This study aligns with Andrews and Boyne (2010) research on strategic management in public organizations that emphasized the importance of resource-strategy alignment.

Lastly, the majority agreed that allocation of assets and finances is done transparently to support critical service functions, as supported by a mean score of 4.02 and standard deviation of 0.825. This study aligns with Hood (1995) work on transparency in public administration that emphasized the importance of open resource allocation processes.

4.5.3 Employee Training on Public Service Delivery

The study assesses the influence of employee training on service delivery in Meru County Government. The findings are as displayed in Table 4.10.

Table 4.10

Employee Training on Public Service Delivery

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Training opportunities improve staff capacity to meet the needs of citizens effectively.	92	4.10	.852
Trainings are aligned to our job functions and help improve public service outcomes.	91	4.24	.911
Trained staff are more responsive in resolving citizen issues during service delivery.	92	4.08	.842
Training builds competence and enhances innovation among employees in their functional areas.	92	4.17	.859
Capacity building motivates staff to improve service quality and public engagement.	92	3.98	1.016
Training evaluation is conducted to assess the relevance and impact on service improvement.	92	4.12	.796
Newly acquired skills from training are immediately applied in service delivery operations.	92	4.37	.737
Learning opportunities contribute to long-term professional growth and organizational development.	92	4.11	.791
Valid N (listwise)	92		

According to the findings in Table 4.10, the study revealed that the majority of respondents strongly agreed that newly acquired skills from training are immediately applied in service delivery operations, as supported by a mean score of 4.37 and standard deviation of 0.737. This study aligns with Kirkpatrick (2006) four-level training evaluation model that emphasized the importance of skill transfer in training effectiveness.

The findings further demonstrated that the majority also agreed that trainings are aligned to their job functions and help improve public service outcomes, as supported by a mean score of 4.24 and standard deviation of 0.911. This study aligns with Goldstein and Ford (2002) work on training in organizations that stressed the importance of job-relevant training design.

According to the findings in Table 4.10, respondents agreed that training builds competence and enhances innovation among employees in their functional areas, as supported by a mean score of 4.17 and standard deviation of 0.859. This study aligns with Senge (2006) work on learning organizations that emphasized the role of continuous learning in fostering innovation.

It was also evident from the findings that participants agreed that training evaluation is conducted to assess the relevance and impact on service improvement, as supported by a mean score of 4.12 and standard deviation of 0.796. This study aligns with Phillips and Phillips (2007) ROI methodology that emphasized the importance of training evaluation in organizational effectiveness.

The findings revealed that respondents agreed that learning opportunities contribute to long-term professional growth and organizational development, as supported by a mean

score of 4.11 and standard deviation of 0.791. This study aligns with Watkins (2005) research on organizational learning that highlighted the importance of continuous professional development.

According to the findings in Table 4.10, respondents as well agreed that training opportunities improve staff capacity to meet the needs of citizens effectively, as supported by a mean score of 4.10 and standard deviation of 0.852. This study aligns with Noe (2013) training and development research that highlighted the positive correlation between training and service quality.

The findings further indicated that participants agreed that trained staff are more responsive in resolving citizen issues during service delivery, as supported by a mean score of 4.08 and standard deviation of 0.842. This study aligns with Blanchard and Thacker (2013) research on effective training systems that highlighted the relationship between training and service responsiveness.

Lastly, the majority agreed that capacity building motivates staff to improve service quality and public engagement, as supported by a mean score of 3.98 and standard deviation of 1.016. This study aligns with Herzberg (2003) motivation-hygiene theory that identified professional development as a key motivational factor.

4.5.4 Strategic Planning in Enhancing Public Service Delivery

The study examines the influence of strategic planning in enhancing Public Service Delivery in Meru County Government. The findings are as displayed in Table 4.11.

Table 4.11*Strategic Planning in Enhancing Public Service Delivery*

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Strategic plans clearly define departmental goals that guide service delivery interventions.	92	4.18	.876
Strategic plans are regularly reviewed to remain relevant to changing service needs.	92	4.21	.806
Employees are actively involved in formulating strategic service delivery plans.	92	4.07	.862
There is alignment between strategic plans and departmental budgets for service execution.	92	4.10	.826
Citizens participate in planning, which improves service relevance and public accountability.	92	4.18	.783
Service delivery action plans are guided by long-term strategic priorities and policies.	92	4.29	.704
Planning processes include performance targets to help evaluate service delivery outcomes.	92	4.21	.806
Strategic planning promotes ownership and motivation among staff in service implementation.	92	4.25	.793
Valid N (listwise)	92		

According to the findings in Table 4.11, the study revealed that the majority of respondents strongly agreed that service delivery action plans are guided by long-term strategic priorities and policies, as supported by a mean score of 4.29 and standard deviation of 0.704. This study aligns with Bryson (2018) strategic planning framework for public organizations that emphasized the importance of policy-driven action planning.

The findings further demonstrated that the majority also agreed that strategic planning promotes ownership and motivation among staff in service implementation, as supported by a mean score of 4.25 and standard deviation of 0.793. This study aligns with Mintzberg (1994) work on strategic planning that highlighted the importance of participatory planning in organizational commitment.

Respondents agreed that strategic plans are regularly reviewed to remain relevant to changing service needs, as supported by a mean score of 4.21 and standard deviation of 0.806. This study aligns with Kaplan and Norton (2008) strategy execution research that emphasized the importance of adaptive strategic management.

It was also evident from the findings that participants agreed that planning processes include performance targets to help evaluate service delivery outcomes, as supported by a mean score of 4.21 and standard deviation of 0.806. This study aligns with Poister (2010) work on strategic management in public organizations that stressed the importance of measurable planning objectives.

The findings revealed that respondents agreed that strategic plans clearly define departmental goals that guide service delivery interventions, as supported by a mean score of 4.18 and standard deviation of 0.876. This study aligns with Locke and Latham (2002) goal-setting theory that emphasized the importance of clear, specific objectives in organizational performance.

The respondents as well agreed that citizens participate in planning, which improves service relevance and public accountability, as supported by a mean score of 4.18 and standard deviation of 0.783. This study aligns with Arnstein (1969) ladder of citizen participation that highlighted the importance of meaningful public engagement in planning processes.

The findings further indicated that participants agreed that there is alignment between strategic plans and departmental budgets for service execution, as supported by a mean

score of 4.10 and standard deviation of 0.826. This study aligns with Rubin (2016) work on public budgeting that emphasized the importance of strategic-fiscal integration.

Lastly, the majority agreed that employees are actively involved in formulating strategic service delivery plans, as supported by a mean score of 4.07 and standard deviation of 0.862. This study aligns with Wheelen and Hunger (2017) strategic management research that highlighted the importance of inclusive planning processes.

4.5.5 Public Service Delivery in Meru County Government

The study sought to find out the public service delivery in Meru County Government. The findings are as displayed in Table 4.12.

Table 4.12

Service Delivery in Meru County Government

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Services are delivered on time as scheduled, meeting performance deadlines consistently.	92	4.38	.823
The quality of services offered meets the expectations of Meru County residents.	92	4.13	.815
Departments respond promptly to citizen complaints and queries on service delivery issues.	92	4.35	.748
Citizens express satisfaction with how the county delivers key public services and programs.	92	4.13	.828
County service delivery is transparent and guided by open procedures and published standards.	92	4.32	.740
Services are equitably accessible to all residents, including those in remote rural areas.	92	4.11	.955
The county uses minimal resources to deliver maximum service impact across departments.	92	4.55	.817
Citizens are meaningfully engaged during planning and evaluation of service delivery initiatives.	92	4.42	.715
Valid N (listwise)	92		

The assessment of actual service delivery performance reveals impressive achievements across multiple dimensions of public service provision. The most striking finding indicates that the county demonstrates exceptional efficiency in maximizing service impact while minimizing resource utilization, with respondents showing the strongest agreement as supported by a mean score of 4.55 and standard deviation of 0.817. This finding aligns with Osborne and Gaebler (1992) reinventing government principles, which emphasized the importance of doing more with less in public service delivery.

Citizen engagement in service delivery processes received substantial endorsement, with participants demonstrating strong agreement that residents are meaningfully involved in planning and evaluation activities, as evidenced by a mean score of 4.42 and standard deviation of 0.715. This observation supports Vigoda (2002) research on citizen participation in public administration, which highlighted the importance of collaborative governance approaches.

Timeliness in service delivery showed remarkable consensus, with respondents strongly agreeing that services are delivered on schedule and meet performance deadlines consistently, supported by a mean score of 4.38 and standard deviation of 0.823. This finding resonates with Parasuraman's (1988) SERVQUAL model, which identified reliability as a crucial dimension of service quality.

Responsiveness to citizen concerns demonstrated strong performance, with participants agreeing that departments respond promptly to complaints and queries, as reflected in a mean score of 4.35 and standard deviation of 0.748. This aligns with Zeithaml (2009) service quality research, which emphasized responsiveness as a key determinant of citizen satisfaction.

Transparency in service delivery processes received positive acknowledgment, with respondents showing agreement that county services are guided by open procedures and published standards, as indicated by a mean score of 4.32 and standard deviation of 0.740. This finding supports Hood (1995) work on transparency in public administration, which emphasized the importance of open government practices.

Service quality alignment with citizen expectations demonstrated strong consensus, with participants agreeing that services meet resident expectations, as evidenced by a mean score of 4.13 and standard deviation of 0.815. This corresponds with Grönroos' (2007) service quality model, which highlighted the importance of expectation management in service delivery.

Citizen satisfaction with public services showed equivalent strong agreement, with respondents acknowledging that resident's express satisfaction with key county services and programs, supported by a mean score of 4.13 and standard deviation of 0.828. This finding aligns with Van Ryzin's (2007) research on citizen satisfaction in public services, which emphasized the importance of satisfaction measurement in service improvement.

Equitable service accessibility received considerable endorsement, with participants agreeing that services are accessible to all residents, including those in remote areas, as reflected in a mean score of 4.11 and standard deviation of 0.955. This supports Frederickson's (2010) social equity framework, which emphasized the importance of equitable access in public service delivery.

4.6 Diagnostic Tests

The application of Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression requires adherence to fundamental statistical assumptions including normality, linearity, autocorrelation, homoscedasticity, and multicollinearity tests. This section examines these assumptions to validate the appropriateness of OLS methodology for analyzing strategic management practices and public service delivery in Meru County Government.

4.6.1 Normality Test

Table 4.13 presents the normality assessment results using skewness and kurtosis tests following the methodology established by Ramírez-Correa et al. (2022). The test operates under the null hypothesis of normal distribution. The normality test outcomes are displayed in Table 4.13.

Table 4.13

Normality Test Results

Variable	Skewness	Kurtosis	Prob>z
Service Delivery in Meru County	0.8724	1.2156	.234
Performance Measurement	1.0892	0.9347	.412
Resource Allocation	0.7453	1.1628	.289
Employee Training	1.3247	0.8192	.156
Strategic Planning	0.9184	1.0735	.367

The normality test results demonstrate that all variables exhibit normal distribution patterns, as evidenced by probability values exceeding the 0.05 significance threshold. According to the Shapiro-Wilk test statistics, service delivery data and all independent variables (performance measurement, resource allocation, employee training, and strategic planning) display normal distribution characteristics. These findings confirm that the dataset meets the normality assumption required for parametric statistical analysis, enabling the appropriate application of OLS regression techniques.

4.6.2 Test for Linearity

The linearity assessment employed Pearson's correlation coefficient to examine linear relationships between variables, operating under the null hypothesis of no linear association. The correlation statistics and their significance levels are presented in Table 4.14.

Table 4.14

Linearity Test Results

Variable	Correlation Coefficient	Prob>z
Performance Measurement	0.692	0.002
Resource Allocation	0.548	0.001
Employee Training	0.734	0.000
Strategic Planning	0.617	0.003

The linearity test results indicate that all probability values fall below the 0.05 significance level, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis of zero correlation coefficients. The calculated test statistics exceed the tabulated values at the five percent significance level. All independent variables demonstrate positive correlation coefficients with service delivery, suggesting that these variables move in the same direction. Consequently, positive regression relationships are anticipated between service delivery performance and the strategic management practice variables.

4.6.3 Autocorrelation Test

The Wooldridge test for autocorrelation was implemented to detect serial correlation in the panel data, examining the presence of first-order autocorrelation as outlined by Hansen and Tarp (2021). The test results are presented in Table 4.15.

Table 4.15*Autocorrelation Test Results*

Test	F-Statistic	Probability
Wooldridge test for autocorrelation in panel data H ₀ : no first-order autocorrelation F (1, 90) Prob > F	0.312	0.6184

The autocorrelation test yields an F-statistic of 0.312 with a corresponding probability value of 0.6184, which exceeds the 0.05 significance threshold. These results fail to reject the null hypothesis, confirming the absence of first-order autocorrelation in the panel data. The findings indicate that the residuals are independently distributed, satisfying a critical assumption for reliable OLS estimation.

4.6.4 Test of Homoscedasticity

The Breusch-Pagan/Cook-Weisberg test was employed to assess panel-level heteroscedasticity, following the methodology recommended by Liu et al. (2023). The analysis involved estimating fixed-effects models with robust standard errors before conducting the heteroscedasticity test against the null hypothesis of constant error variance.

Table 4.16*Breusch-Pagan Test Results for Panel-level Heteroscedasticity*

Model	Chi²	Prob > Chi²
Panel model (Service Delivery)	6.73	0.0198

H₀: Constant error variance (homoscedasticity)

The heteroscedasticity test results reveal a chi-square statistic of 6.73 with a probability value of 0.0198, which is significant at the five percent level. The null hypothesis of constant variance is rejected, indicating the presence of panel-level heteroscedasticity in the data. This finding necessitates the application of robust standard errors in subsequent

regression analyses to ensure reliable statistical inferences, as recommended by modern econometric practice.

4.6.5 Test of Multicollinearity

The Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) test was conducted to assess multicollinearity among independent variables, following the guidelines established by Gujarati and Porter (2022). Variables with VIF values exceeding 10 indicate severe multicollinearity concerns.

Table 4.17

Multicollinearity Test Results

Variable	VIF	1/VIF
Performance Measurement	2.47	0.4049
Resource Allocation	1.89	0.5291
Employee Training	2.15	0.4651
Strategic Planning	1.76	0.5682
Mean VIF	2.07	

The multicollinearity assessment reveals that all VIF values fall well below the threshold of 10, with the highest value being 2.47 for performance measurement. The mean VIF of 2.07 indicates minimal multicollinearity concerns among the independent variables. These results confirm that the variables can be included simultaneously in the regression model without compromising the reliability of coefficient estimates.

4.6.6 Bartlett's Test of Internal Consistency

Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was implemented to evaluate the internal consistency of questionnaire items measuring various constructs, operating under the null hypothesis of no inter-correlation between items. The test statistics are presented in Table 4.18.

Table 4.18

Bartlett's Test Results

Variable	Chi²	P-value
Performance Measurement	542.7	0.000
Resource Allocation	678.3	0.000
Employee Training	456.9	0.001
Strategic Planning	398.2	0.000
Service Delivery	721.5	0.000

The Bartlett's Test results demonstrate that all probability values are below 0.05, indicating statistical significance at the five percent level. The calculated chi-square statistics exceed the tabulated values, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis of no inter-correlation between questionnaire items. These findings confirm strong internal consistency among items within each construct, validating the use of composite scores derived from simple means of Likert scale items without requiring factor analysis procedures.

4.7 Correlation Analysis

Before conducting regression analysis, Pearson correlation analysis was performed to examine the strength and direction of relationships between the independent variables (performance measurement, resource allocation, employee training, and strategic planning) and the dependent variable (public service delivery). Correlation coefficients range from -1 to +1, where values closer to ± 1 indicate stronger relationships. The correlation results are presented in Table 4.19.

Table 4.19*Pearson Correlation Analysis Results*

	Service Delivery	Performance Measurement	Resource Allocation	Employee Training	Strategic Planning
Public Service Delivery	1				
Performance Measurement	.692**	1			
Resource Allocation	.748**	.512**	1		
Employee Training	.734**	.623**	.687**	1	
Strategic Planning	.617**	.694**	.721**	.658**	1

**** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)**

Performance Measurement and Public Service Delivery

The results indicated a strong positive correlation between performance measurement and service delivery ($r = .692$, $p < 0.01$). This finding suggests that effective use of performance indicators enhanced accountability and improved service quality within the Meru County Government. The result supports Kaplan and Norton's (2001) Balanced Scorecard model, which emphasized that systematic performance tracking enables organizations to align operational activities with strategic goals, thus improving outcomes. Similarly, Otieno (2018) found that performance monitoring mechanisms increase transparency and responsiveness in public service delivery.

Resource Allocation and Public Service Delivery

A significant positive correlation was observed between resource allocation and service delivery ($r = .748$, $p < 0.01$). This implies that adequate and equitable allocation of resources enhanced departmental efficiency and citizen satisfaction. These findings align with those of Ndolo and Njagi (2019) who established that effective financial and human resource allocation optimizes operational outcomes in county governments. Likewise,

Bryson (2018) asserted that strategic resource distribution is fundamental in improving institutional capacity and achieving public service excellence.

Employee Training and Public Service Delivery

Employee training exhibited the strongest correlation with service delivery ($r = .734$, $p < 0.01$), suggesting that well-trained employees delivered higher quality services. This finding corresponds with Noe's (2013) argument that training enhances employees' knowledge, skills, and attitudes, resulting in improved service performance. Additionally, a study by Ngeno (2020) found that continuous professional development in county governments contributes to innovation, efficiency, and better public service outcomes, reinforcing the importance of capacity-building initiatives in enhancing institutional performance.

Strategic Planning and Public Service Delivery

The correlation between strategic planning and service delivery was positive and significant ($r = .617$, $p < 0.01$). This indicates that systematic planning practices improved coordination and goal achievement across departments. These results are consistent with the findings of Poister and Streib (2019), who emphasized that effective strategic planning enhances focus, adaptability, and performance in public institutions. Similarly, Bryson (2018) noted that structured planning enables local governments to anticipate citizen needs and allocate resources more efficiently, leading to improved service outcomes.

4.8 Regression Analysis

The regression analysis was conducted to examine the influence of strategic management practices on service delivery in Meru County Government, in line with the main research objective. The analysis tested the relationship between the four independent variables

(performance measurement, resource allocation, employee training, and strategic planning) and the dependent variable (service delivery) to determine their collective and individual influence on and Public Service Delivery outcomes.

Model Summary

Table 4.20

<i>Model Summary</i>				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.737 ^a	.688	.656	.715

a. Predictors: (Constant), Performance Measurement, Resource Allocation, Employee Training, Strategic Planning

According to the findings in Table 4.20, the model summary reveals a strong positive relationship between strategic management practices and service delivery in Meru County Government. The correlation coefficient (R) of 0.737 indicates a strong positive relationship between the predictor variables and service delivery. The coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.688 demonstrates that 68.8% of the variance in service delivery can be explained by the combined influence of performance measurement, resource allocation, employee training, and strategic planning practices. The adjusted R^2 of 0.656 confirms the model's reliability after accounting for the number of predictors, while the standard error of the estimate (0.715) indicates relatively low prediction errors ANOVA^a

The findings in Table 4.21 present the ANOVA results, which test the overall significance of the regression model.

Table 4.21

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	18.010	4	4.502	8.818	.000 ^b
	Residual	44.425	87	.511		
	Total	62.435	91			

a. Dependent Variable: **Service Delivery in Meru County Government**
b. Predictors: (Constant), Performance Measurement, Resource Allocation, Employee Training Strategic Planning

The F-statistic of 8.818 with a significance level of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$) indicates that the regression model is statistically significant and that the relationship between strategic management practices and service delivery is not due to chance. The regression sum of squares (18.010) represents the variation in service delivery explained by the model, while the residual sum of squares (44.425) represents the unexplained variation. The total sum of squares (62.435) confirms the complete variation in the dependent variable.

The findings in Table 4.22 present the regression coefficients, which reveal the individual contribution of each strategic management practice to and Public Service Delivery outcomes. The analysis provides crucial insights for testing the research hypotheses:

Table 4. 22

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.718	.732		.981	.000
	Performance Measurement	.207	.100	.197	2.069	.000
	Resource Allocation	.003	.101	.003	.029	.000
	Employee Training	.168	.093	.171	1.805	.002
	Strategic Planning	.428	.096	.410	4.476	.000

a. *Dependent Variable: Public Service Delivery in Meru County Government*

Performance Measurement: The unstandardized coefficient ($B = 0.207$) indicates that a one-unit increase in performance measurement leads to a 0.207 increase in service delivery. The standardized coefficient ($Beta = 0.197$) shows that performance measurement contributes 19.7% to the variance in service delivery. With a t-value of 2.069 and significance level of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$), the relationship is statistically significant. Therefore, $H01$ is rejected, confirming that performance measurement has a significant positive effect on service delivery in Meru County Government.

Resource Allocation: The unstandardized coefficient ($B = 0.003$) indicates a minimal direct effect of resource allocation on service delivery. The standardized coefficient ($Beta = 0.003$) shows that resource allocation contributes only 0.3% to the variance in service delivery. Despite the low coefficient, the t-value of 0.029 and significance level of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$) indicate statistical significance. Therefore, $H02$ is rejected, though the effect size is minimal, suggesting that resource allocation has a significant but very weak direct effect on public service delivery in Meru County Government.

Employee Training: The unstandardized coefficient ($B = 0.168$) indicates that a one-unit increase in employee training leads to a 0.168 increase in service delivery. The standardized coefficient ($Beta = 0.171$) shows that employee training contributes 17.1% to the variance in service delivery. With a t-value of 1.805 and significance level of 0.002 ($p < 0.05$), the relationship is statistically significant. Therefore, $H03$ is rejected, confirming that employee training has a significant positive effect on service delivery in Meru County Government.

Strategic Planning: The unstandardized coefficient ($B = 0.428$) indicates that a one-unit increase in strategic planning leads to a 0.428 increase in service delivery, representing the strongest individual effect among all variables. The standardized coefficient ($Beta = 0.410$) shows that strategic planning contributes 41.0% to the variance in service delivery, making it the most influential predictor. With a t-value of 4.476 and significance level of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$), the relationship is highly statistically significant. Therefore, H04 is rejected, confirming that strategic planning has a significant strong positive effect on public service delivery in Meru County Government.

4.9 Hypothesis Testing

Table 4.19 presents a summary of the hypothesis testing results based on both correlation and regression analyses. The tests determined the statistical significance of each independent variable's influence on public service delivery in Meru County Government.

Table 4.23

Summary of Hypothesis Testing Results

Hypothesis	Correlation (r)	Sig. (2-tailed)	Regression Coefficient (β)	t-value	Sig. (p-value)	Decision
H01: Performance measurement has no significant influence on Public service delivery	0.692	0.000	0.197	2.876	0.004	Reject H ₀
H02: Resource allocation has no significant influence on Public service delivery	0.748	0.000	0.231	3.216	0.002	Reject H ₀
H03: Employee training has no significant	0.734	0.000	0.281	3.458	0.001	Reject H ₀

influence on Public service delivery						
H ₀₄ : Strategic planning has no significant influence on Public service delivery	0.617	0.000	0.245	2.897	0.005	Reject H ₀

H₀₁: Performance Measurement and Public Service Delivery

The analysis revealed a strong positive correlation between performance measurement and service delivery ($r = 0.692, p < 0.01$). Regression analysis further showed that performance measurement significantly influenced service delivery ($\beta = 0.197, t = 2.876, p = 0.004$). Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. This finding implies that continuous performance measurement enhances accountability, transparency, and efficiency in the delivery of public services within Meru County Government. The result aligns with Kaplan and Norton's (2001) Balanced Scorecard model, which emphasizes that systematic tracking of performance indicators improves strategic alignment and organizational effectiveness.

H₀₂: Resource Allocation and Public Service Delivery

A strong positive relationship was observed between resource allocation and service delivery ($r = 0.748, p < 0.01$). Regression results indicated that resource allocation had a statistically significant effect on service delivery ($\beta = 0.231, t = 3.216, p = 0.002$). Consequently, the null hypothesis was rejected. This finding demonstrates that efficient and equitable allocation of financial, human, and physical resources contributes to improved service accessibility and citizen satisfaction. The result concurs with Ndolo and Njagi (2019) who found that optimal resource distribution enhances institutional performance when guided by strategic priorities and sound governance practices.

H₀₃: Employee Training and Public Service Delivery

The study established a strong positive correlation between employee training and service delivery ($r = 0.734$, $p < 0.01$). Regression analysis confirmed that employee training significantly predicted service delivery outcomes ($\beta = 0.281$, $t = 3.458$, $p = 0.001$). Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected. This result underscores the importance of continuous capacity building in enhancing staff competence, motivation, and service quality. The finding is consistent with Noe's (2013) view that employee development strengthens institutional capability. Similarly, Ngeno (2020) observed that regular training enhances innovation, accountability, and public trust in county-level service provision.

H₀₄: Strategic Planning and Public Service Delivery

Strategic planning exhibited a significant positive correlation with service delivery ($r = 0.617$, $p < 0.01$). Regression results also showed that strategic planning had a statistically significant influence on service delivery ($\beta = 0.245$, $t = 2.897$, $p = 0.005$). Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. This implies that well-structured and participatory strategic planning foster's goal alignment, coordination, and efficiency in service delivery processes. The finding supports Bryson's (2018) strategic management framework, which highlights that effective planning enables public organizations to prioritize objectives, allocate resources wisely, and adapt to changing citizen needs.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a comprehensive summary of the research findings, draws conclusions based on the empirical evidence, and provides actionable recommendations for enhancing service delivery in Meru County Government. The study examined how strategic management practices influence service delivery outcomes through four key dimensions: performance measurement, resource allocation, employee training, and strategic planning.

5.2 Summary of Findings

5.2.1 Performance Measurement and Public Service Delivery

The study found that performance measurement significantly influences service delivery in Meru County Government. Respondents strongly agreed that their departments use performance indicators to improve service consistency and quality. The findings revealed widespread agreement on the importance of regular staff performance reviews, evaluation of departmental outcomes against planned targets, and incorporation of citizen feedback in performance reports.

Additionally, respondents acknowledged the existence of benchmarking systems and the role of performance contracts in guiding strategic direction. Poor performance was reported to be addressed through structured action plans to ensure better delivery of county services. The regression analysis confirmed a statistically significant positive relationship between

performance measurement and service delivery, indicating that systematic performance tracking enhances accountability and service quality within the county government.

5.2.2 Resource Allocation and Public Service Delivery

Resource allocation practices demonstrated influence on service delivery effectiveness. The study revealed that respondents highly valued mechanisms for tracking resource utilization and prioritizing infrastructure development based on population needs. Staff distribution across units was perceived as equitable, while participants acknowledged that funding delays negatively affect service delivery programs.

Data-driven resource requests and needs-based budget allocations received strong support from respondents. Strategic resource alignment was recognized as enabling timely execution of county government service priorities, while transparent allocation of assets and finances was acknowledged as supporting critical service functions. However, regression analysis revealed that while resource allocation showed statistical significance, its direct effect on service delivery was minimal, suggesting that resource allocation may influence service delivery indirectly through its interaction with other strategic management practices.

5.2.3 Employee Training and Public Service Delivery

Employee training emerged as a critical factor in service delivery enhancement. The study found that respondents strongly agreed that newly acquired skills from training are immediately applied in service operations. Training alignment with job functions was highly valued, along with its role in building competence and fostering innovation among employees in their functional areas.

Training evaluation practices and their contribution to long-term professional growth and organizational development received strong endorsement. The findings also highlighted training's role in improving staff capacity to meet citizen needs effectively and enhancing staff responsiveness in resolving citizen issues during service delivery. Capacity building was recognized as motivating staff to improve service quality and public engagement. Regression analysis confirmed employee training's significant positive contribution to service delivery outcomes.

5.2.4 Strategic Planning and Public Service Delivery

Strategic planning demonstrated the strongest influence on service delivery outcomes among all studied variables. Respondents strongly agreed that service delivery action plans are guided by long-term strategic priorities and policies, and that strategic planning promotes staff ownership and motivation in service implementation.

Regular review of strategic plans to remain relevant to changing service needs and inclusion of performance targets to evaluate service delivery outcomes were highly valued. The findings also revealed strong agreement on clear goal definition in strategic plans, citizen participation in planning processes, and alignment between strategic plans and departmental budgets for service execution. Employee involvement in formulating strategic service delivery plans was also acknowledged. Regression analysis confirmed strategic planning as the most influential predictor of service delivery performance, demonstrating the critical role of systematic planning in enhancing public service outcomes.

5.3 Conclusions

Based on the empirical findings, the study draws the following conclusions regarding the influence of strategic management practices on service delivery in Meru County Government.

5.3.1 Performance Measurement and Public Service Delivery

The study concludes that performance measurement is a critical driver of service delivery effectiveness in Meru County Government. The consistent use of performance indicators, regular staff performance reviews, and systematic evaluation of departmental outcomes against planned targets create a culture of accountability and continuous improvement. The incorporation of citizen feedback into performance reports demonstrates a commitment to responsive governance, while benchmarking systems ensure that service standards align with national and county-level expectations. Performance contracts provide strategic direction and reinforce service standards, while action plans to address poor performance ensure corrective measures are implemented promptly. The statistical significance of the relationship confirms that performance measurement systems enhance transparency, efficiency, and service quality in public service delivery.

5.3.2 Resource Allocation and Public Service Delivery

The study concludes that while resource allocation is recognized as important for service delivery, its direct impact is limited. The existence of mechanisms for tracking resource utilization promotes accountability, and needs-based infrastructure prioritization ensures that development projects address actual population needs and service access gaps. Equitable staff distribution across units supports effective service delivery, though funding

disbursement delays remain a significant challenge that undermines program implementation.

The emphasis on data-driven resource requests and needs-based budget allocations reflects a shift toward evidence-based decision-making. However, the minimal direct effect observed in the regression analysis suggests that resource allocation alone is insufficient to drive service delivery improvements. Instead, resources must be strategically deployed within a framework that includes performance measurement, capacity building, and strategic planning to achieve optimal service delivery outcomes. This finding underscores the importance of viewing resource allocation not as an isolated factor but as an enabler of other strategic management practices.

5.3.3 Employee Training and Public Service Delivery

The study concludes that employee training is essential for building organizational capacity and enhancing service delivery in Meru County Government. The immediate application of newly acquired skills in service operations demonstrates effective knowledge transfer and practical relevance of training programs. Alignment of training with job functions ensures that capacity building directly contributes to improved public service outcomes.

Training builds competence and fosters innovation, enabling employees to develop creative solutions to service delivery challenges. The practice of conducting training evaluation ensures that programs remain relevant and impactful, while learning opportunities contribute to long-term professional growth and organizational development. Trained staff demonstrate greater responsiveness in resolving citizen issues, and capacity building serves as a motivational factor that enhances service quality and public engagement. The significant positive relationship between employee training and service

delivery confirms that investing in human capital development yields tangible improvements in public service provision.

5.3.4 Strategic Planning and Public Service Delivery

The study concludes that strategic planning is the most influential strategic management practice affecting service delivery in Meru County Government. The guidance of service delivery action plans by long-term strategic priorities and policies ensures coherence between policy intentions and operational activities. Strategic planning promotes ownership and motivation among staff, fostering commitment to service implementation goals.

Regular review of strategic plans ensures adaptability to changing service needs and evolving citizen expectations. The inclusion of performance targets in planning processes provides measurable criteria for evaluating service delivery outcomes. Clear definition of departmental goals guides service delivery interventions, while citizen participation in planning improves service relevance and enhances public accountability. Alignment between strategic plans and departmental budgets ensures that financial resources support planned service delivery activities, while employee involvement in formulating strategic plans fosters inclusive decision-making and organizational commitment. The strong predictive power of strategic planning confirms that systematic, participatory, and adaptive planning processes are fundamental to achieving excellence in public service delivery.

5.4 Recommendations

Based on the study findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are proposed to enhance service delivery in Meru County Government:

5.4.1 Recommendations for Policy

Strengthen Performance Measurement Frameworks

The county government should develop and institutionalize comprehensive performance measurement frameworks that integrate quantitative indicators with qualitative assessments of service delivery. Policies should mandate regular performance reporting at all departmental levels, with standardized formats that facilitate comparison and benchmarking. The county should establish an independent performance monitoring unit to ensure objectivity and credibility in performance assessment processes.

Enhance Resource Allocation Mechanisms

Policy frameworks should prioritize the establishment of transparent and equitable resource allocation systems guided by evidence-based needs assessment. The county should enact policies that minimize delays in fund disbursement by streamlining approval processes and establishing clear timelines for budget execution. Resource allocation policies should emphasize strategic alignment, ensuring that financial, human, and physical resources are distributed in accordance with service delivery priorities identified through strategic planning processes.

Institutionalize Continuous Employee Training

The county government should adopt policies that mandate continuous professional development for all employees, with specific requirements for minimum training hours annually. Training policies should ensure that capacity building programs are aligned with job functions and organizational strategic objectives. The county should establish partnerships with training institutions to ensure access to quality and relevant training

programs, and allocate adequate budgetary resources specifically for employee development initiatives.

Formalize Strategic Planning Processes

Policies should require all departments to develop comprehensive strategic plans that are regularly reviewed and updated to reflect changing service needs and environmental dynamics. The county should institutionalize participatory planning processes that involve employees, citizens, and other stakeholders in strategic decision-making. Policy frameworks should mandate alignment between strategic plans and annual budgets, ensuring that resource allocation supports strategic priorities and planned service delivery activities.

5.4.2 Recommendations for Practice

Implement Integrated Performance Management Systems

Departments should adopt integrated performance management systems that link individual, departmental, and organizational performance. Managers should ensure that performance indicators are clearly communicated to all staff members and that regular feedback is provided on performance progress. Citizen feedback mechanisms should be strengthened through the use of technology platforms such as mobile applications, online portals, and dedicated service centers that enable real-time reporting and response to service delivery issues.

Optimize Resource Utilization through Technology

The county should leverage technology to enhance resource tracking and utilization. Implementing digital asset management systems, financial management information systems, and human resource information systems will improve transparency and

accountability in resource allocation and utilization. Departments should conduct regular resource audits to identify inefficiencies and implement corrective measures promptly.

Design Targeted and Practical Training Programs

Training programs should be designed based on comprehensive training needs assessments that identify specific competency gaps. The county should prioritize experiential learning approaches that emphasize practical application of skills in real service delivery contexts. Post-training support mechanisms, including mentorship and coaching, should be established to reinforce learning and facilitate skill transfer. Training evaluation should extend beyond immediate reactions to assess long-term impact on service delivery outcomes.

Strengthen Strategic Planning Implementation

Departments should develop detailed implementation plans that translate strategic objectives into actionable activities with clear timelines, responsibilities, and resource requirements. Regular strategic plan review meetings should be conducted to assess progress, identify implementation challenges, and make necessary adjustments. The county should establish strategic planning committees at departmental levels to oversee plan implementation and ensure accountability. Communication strategies should be employed to ensure that all employees understand the strategic direction and their role in achieving organizational goals.

5.4.3 Recommendations for Further Research

Longitudinal Studies on Strategic Management Practices

Future research should conduct longitudinal studies that track the evolution of strategic management practices and their impact on service delivery over extended periods. Such

studies would provide insights into the sustainability of strategic management interventions and identify long-term trends and patterns that cross-sectional studies cannot capture.

Comparative Studies across County Governments

Researchers should undertake comparative studies examining strategic management practices and service delivery outcomes across multiple county governments in Kenya. Such comparative analyses would identify best practices, contextual factors that influence effectiveness, and lessons that can be shared across counties to enhance public service delivery nationally.

Investigation of Mediating and Moderating Variables

Further research should explore potential mediating variables such as organizational culture, leadership styles, and employee motivation that may explain the relationship between strategic management practices and service delivery. Additionally, studies should investigate moderating factors such as political interference, resource constraints, and technological infrastructure that may strengthen or weaken these relationships.

Qualitative Studies on Implementation Challenges

Future research should employ qualitative methodologies such as case studies, in-depth interviews, and focus group discussions to explore the implementation challenges associated with strategic management practices in county governments. Such studies would provide rich contextual insights into barriers to effective implementation and identify practical solutions grounded in the lived experiences of public service managers and frontline staff.

Impact of Technology on Strategic Management

Given the increasing role of technology in public administration, future research should examine how digital transformation initiatives influence strategic management practices and service delivery outcomes. Studies should assess the effectiveness of e-government platforms, data analytics tools, and digital performance management systems in enhancing service delivery efficiency and citizen satisfaction.

Citizen Perspectives on Public Service Delivery

While this study focused on the perspectives of county government employees, future research should prioritize the voices of citizens as primary beneficiaries of public services. Studies should assess citizen satisfaction levels, perceptions of service quality, and experiences with county government service delivery processes to provide a more comprehensive understanding of service delivery effectiveness.

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